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I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

1. The President opened the 1998 annual session of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board by noting that the session was particularly important for both UNDP and UNFPA as it took place at a time when needs for development assistance were increasing while resources allocated to it were decreasing. He observed that the decrease was not the result of a lack of resources in donor countries but was the result of a lack of comprehension by taxpayers of what development assistance was really about, how resources were utilized and what impact development assistance had not only on recipient countries but on the world economy in general. The President underscored that the work of the Executive Board members, as true partners representing donor and programme countries, was to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of development assistance and to communicate its long-term goals and impact in a more effective manner.

Report on the second regular session 1998 (DP/1998/15)

2. The Secretary of the Executive Board informed the Board that the draft report of the second regular session 1998 had been sent out earlier to Executive Board members and that additional copies would be made available at the current session. The Executive Board agreed that the approval of the report on the second regular session 1998 would be deferred to the third regular session 1998. The Secretary drew the attention of the Board to the tentative work plan for the annual session and noted that the presentation by the Executive Director of the United Nations International Partnership Trust Fund had been tentatively rescheduled for the third regular session 1998.

Special event

3. The Chief of the Executive Board Branch of UNFPA informed the Board that on the afternoon of Monday, 8 June 1998, there would be a special event featuring a panel discussion on reproductive health and reproductive rights. The discussion would be chaired by the Executive Director of UNFPA with panellists from the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Health Organization, the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Adoption of the agenda and agreement on the work plan

4. The Executive Board approved the agenda and work plan for the annual session as contained in documents DP/1998/L.3; DP/1998/L.3* (Spanish only) and DP/1998/L.3/Corr.1, as orally amended.

Future sessions

5. The Secretary presented the proposed work plan for the third regular session 1998, scheduled to meet in New York, 14-18 September 1998. She noted that the work plan was quite heavy and said that it might not be possible to cover all items during the session. She also noted that the Executive Board work plan for 1999, which was on the agenda for submission to the third regular

session, would necessarily have to be very tentative since many decisions affecting the work of the Board in the coming year would be taken up only at the third regular session 1998.

6. One delegation brought to the attention of the Executive Board that the high-level dialogue of the General Assembly on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership was scheduled to meet 17-18 September 1998, thus conflicting with the scheduled Executive Board meeting. Many delegations would have to focus their attention on the high-level dialogue. Would it be possible to change the dates of the third regular session? The Secretary said that it would be difficult to change the schedule at such a late date but she said she would investigate the possibilities. The Board asked the Secretary to report to the Bureau on any possible solutions and decided to ask the Bureau to determine the dates of the third regular session.

UNFPA segment

II. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR 1997

7. In introducing the annual report for 1997, the Executive Director stated that the annual session 1998 was pivotal in the process of adopting a sustainable funding strategy for UNFPA that would allow the Fund to play a central role in the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). She added that the session would also address the important issues of absorptive capacity and financial resource utilization, and underscored that resource mobilization and resource utilization were particularly pertinent in light of the heightened activity of the ICPD+5 process. She noted that the ICPD+5 process had got off to a very good start with the first round table on adolescent sexual and reproductive health. Co-sponsored by the Ford Foundation, the round table had been held in New York, in April. Other ICPD+5 events were also well under way, including regional reviews organized by the regional commissions in cooperation with UNFPA and others. She underscored that during 1997, and continuing in the current year, UNFPA had been very actively engaged in supporting the Secretary-General's reform process and was fully committed to implementing the reforms. UNFPA had placed a number of substantive issues relating to programming and programme delivery on the work plan of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG). Those included matters relating to absorptive capacity, national execution, databases, common indicators and joint evaluations among UNDG member organizations.

8. The Executive Director noted that Part I of the annual report focused on two of the most important substantive issues of the ICPD Programme of Action and the Fund's work, namely, reproductive health and reproductive rights, particularly adolescent reproductive health, maternal health, emergency assistance in refugee situations and HIV/AIDS prevention. A key aspect in the analysis contained in the report of those themes was the cooperation and collaboration among development partners. She thanked the Government of Switzerland for its support and collaboration in organizing the Special Event on Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights, held in the context of the annual session of the Executive Board. Noting that the first meeting of the WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health (CCH) would take place on

3 and 4 July, the Executive Director thanked the Board for its strong commitment and support in establishing the CCH and making it operational. Referring to the important issue of sector-wide approaches, she noted that UNFPA had focused attention on it both at country and global levels but needed to become further involved. There were a number of concerns that UNFPA and other partners shared on the subject, including ensuring adequate attention to reproductive health and reproductive rights during the analysis and implementation of health-sector reforms and sector-wide approaches. UNFPA had also brought those issues to the attention of the UNDG.

9. She drew attention to the programme and financial highlights presented in the statistical overview of the annual report. While noting that the Fund's immediate cash flow situation was stable, she expressed concern about general resources for UNFPA and for overall population assistance. Observing that four years after the enthusiasm of Cairo there might be a slackening of commitment for supporting the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, she hoped that the Executive Board would give careful consideration to a funding strategy for UNFPA that would put funding for general resources on a more predictable, assured and continuing basis.

10. Numerous delegations commended the Fund's active role in and commitment to United Nations reform and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) process and encouraged UNFPA to intensify its involvement. One delegation asked about the need to distinguish further between the responsibilities of the United Nations resident coordinator and the UNDP resident representative and inquired whether the integration of those functions hindered coordination at the field level.

11. Several delegations welcomed the attention UNFPA was giving to the sector-wide approach and looked forward to learning more about the Fund's thinking on the subject. Many delegations stated that the topic should be placed on the agenda of the third regular session 1998 of the Executive Board. One delegation stated that it considered the approach to be a model one and encouraged UNFPA to become actively involved in it. Another delegation noted that UNFPA should ensure that reproductive health received parity in such sector-wide programmes. One delegation was encouraged by the Fund's increased dialogue with the World Bank and added that it would share with UNFPA the findings of a recent workshop it had organized with the World Bank on a sector-wide approach for health development. It suggested that UNFPA consider a pilot study to look at the impact of the sector-wide approach on reproductive health and family planning in a country where the introduction of that approach was just beginning. The delegation added that it was important to note that sector-wide approaches were not a type of health sector reform but an approach to funding that was probably best undertaken in countries where health sector reform was already under way. Another delegation, while noting that it welcomed a conference room paper on sector-wide approaches, stressed that UNFPA must remain unencumbered to provide direct support to population and development activities that went beyond the boundaries of a specific sector. Another delegation asked in which areas the Fund might like to seek its guidance. One delegation observed that sector-wide approaches implied partnerships, including with Governments, whose strength, and indeed the strength of the partnership, was impacted by fluctuating economic trends.

12. Numerous delegations commended the Fund's work on developing indicators and inquired about the current status, problems encountered, and the expected time-frame for completion of the work on indicators. One delegation noted that the link between the work programme, the budget and the annual report could be improved by using the same set of indicators to define the results to be achieved and added that that would also help the Executive Board to monitor better the effectiveness of the Fund's activities in its main programme areas.

13. Several delegations welcomed the Fund's support and programming in the areas of adolescent reproductive health, maternal mortality reduction and HIV/AIDS prevention. One delegation underlined the relationship between drug abuse, HIV/AIDS and reproductive health and noted that while the Fund's focus must be on reproductive health, drug abuse should also be dealt with and UNFPA could provide valuable assistance to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) in its efforts in programming and advocacy. One delegation highlighted the HIV/AIDS-prevention work of the International Therapeutic Solidarity Fund, including access to treatment for populations in the developing countries. Another delegation noted the importance of increasing male involvement in reproductive health. It commended the efforts launched by the Fund in the area of reproductive rights and noted that there should also be greater promotion of adolescent reproductive rights.

14. One delegation, observing that various channels had been used in its country to raise awareness about adolescent reproductive health, stated that all actors, including parents, should be involved in policy-making and implementation in order to strengthen their sense of ownership of UNFPA programmes in that area. Another delegation noted that the report should have included information on the reproductive rights of adolescents who were frequently denied treatment for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in several countries, including the delegation's own country. The same delegation stated that it wished the Fund to play a more active role in the struggle against female genital mutilation (FGM). One delegation welcomed the UNFPA-supported adolescent reproductive health activities undertaken in the countries of central Europe and added that donor resources were also needed for census-taking in the region. Another delegation welcomed the Fund's work on adolescent reproductive health in the Caribbean region and asked if the programme included the island of Montserrat. Several delegations welcomed the Fund's initiatives with religious leaders to promote reproductive health.

15. With regard to the ICPD+5 process, one delegation observed that the technical meetings being planned on international migration and on ageing should be results-oriented. The delegation added that in the context of the CCH, UNICEF and WHO should be encouraged to contribute to the ICPD+5 process by assessing the successes and challenges they had encountered in implementing the ICPD Programme of Action. Another delegation wondered whether the planned ICPD+5 technical meetings and round tables were sufficient to provide an overall review of the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. One delegation underscored the importance of focusing on quality-of-care in reproductive health programmes and recommended that the subject be included in the ICPD+5 review.

16. Numerous delegations expressed concern regarding the decline in resources and emphasized the need to address the issue of resource mobilization. Some

delegations pointed out that resource mobilization was inextricably linked to programme effectiveness. One delegation welcomed the Fund's positive income outlook and invited donors to increase their contributions to the Fund, particularly those donors who were underperforming in that regard. Another delegation emphasized the importance of considering a wide range of innovative approaches to resource mobilization, including increased partnerships with the private sector. Referring to the funding available from the United Nations Foundation for innovative projects, one delegation asked about the possibility and scope of integrated activities with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and other agencies, particularly in the areas of gender empowerment, microcredit and family planning services.

17. One delegation asked what was being done to encourage an open, transparent dialogue with donor countries at the field level to inform them about the concrete impact of the Fund's activities. It also asked to be informed on how the gender dimension was being integrated in training activities. The same delegation commended the Fund for its high percentage of female professional staff (46 per cent) at headquarters and for having reduced the amount of unspent allocations in 1996. The delegation was also pleased to note the achievements in the areas of decentralization, monitoring and evaluation.

18. Several delegations noted with concern the decline in national execution of projects in 1997. One delegation stated that it was critical for UNFPA to incorporate national capacity-building into all its activities.

19. One delegation was pleased with the emphasis given to contraceptive requirements and logistics management and hoped that the Fund's role in those areas would continue to increase. The delegation asked for a breakdown of the thematic areas the Fund was focusing on. Another delegation applauded the refinements in the activities of the Fund's Global Initiative on Contraceptive Requirements and Logistics Management Needs in Developing Countries and said it would welcome a brief oral report at the third regular session of the Executive Board on the Fund's efforts to expand the commercial market for contraceptives in developing countries.

20. Several delegations appreciated the Fund's support to refugees and to people who were in emergency or post-crisis situations. One delegation noted that its country had over 2 million refugees and hoped that next year's annual report would include information on UNFPA-supported activities undertaken in its country in the area of reproductive health services for refugees.

21. One delegation, while commending the analytical quality of the section of the report on programme priorities, observed that in addition to success stories it would also have been useful to learn about failures. Another delegation observed that the reporting should be more analytical and results-oriented. It stated that except for the section on the Asia and Pacific region, the regional overview was not analytical. The delegation added that more discussion and problem-analysis should be provided in the areas of HIV/AIDS programming and maternal mortality reduction. One delegation stated that while the report contained discussion of many interesting initiatives, it needed to be stronger on results and added that it would be useful to rely on the logical framework analysis to monitor progress and the results achieved. Another delegation also

observed that the annual report should have focused on results obtained and difficulties encountered in operationalizing reproductive health programmes.

22. One delegation asked for information on the practice of surgical sterilization in certain countries in the Latin America region and also inquired about the increase in the Fund's administrative and personnel costs.

23. One delegation stated that the study to be undertaken by the Fund and the Australian National University should be in the context of globalization and should address the larger question of how the recent economic vicissitudes experienced by some countries impacted their population programmes. The delegation added that while in less developed countries the Fund needed to play a catalytic role in building population programmes, in intermediate countries it needed to help sustain population programmes; furthermore, in the more advanced countries the Fund needed to help to continue the success of population programmes in the face of difficult and fluctuating economic trends.

24. Several delegations were pleased to note the Fund's continuing collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society. One delegation stated that partnerships with grass-roots NGOs should be strengthened and collaboration with regional development banks should be increased. One delegation observed that there had been no increase in resource allocation to NGOs from 1996 to 1997.

25. One delegation, while noting with satisfaction the UNFPA activities undertaken in the countries of central and eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, stated that the particular problem of low or negative population growth faced by its country and other countries in the region required that the Fund use an approach different from that used to address the issue of high population growth.

26. In her reply, the Executive Director thanked the delegations for their comments and stated that she agreed with the delegations who had pointed out that programme effectiveness and programme delivery were related to resource mobilization. She also welcomed the comments on sector-wide approaches and noted that the Fund had placed the subject on the agenda of the UNDG. The Fund would also prepare a conference room paper on the topic for discussion at a subsequent session of the Executive Board. She added that a system-wide view on the important subject of sector-wide approaches would be useful. With regard to indicators, she noted that UNFPA had developed population and reproductive health indicators that had been provided to the field offices. The indicators were the outcome of a collaborative process undertaken by the Fund's technical staff, members of the UNFPA country support teams (CSTs) and various development partners, including other United Nations agencies and NGOs. She underscored that it was not easy to develop indicators when good baseline data were unavailable. She added that in addition to the programme indicators developed by UNFPA there were also system-wide indicators developed by the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Task Force on Basic Social Services for All. She stated that if the Board was interested, the Fund would organize an informal meeting on indicators. She added that there had been an attempt to develop some indicators on national capacity-building but, given the scope and nature of the

issue, it would be more useful to have a joint undertaking on that with UNDP and UNICEF.

27. The Executive Director was pleased to note that all the delegations that had made interventions agreed that adolescent reproductive health and maternal mortality reduction were two key areas that the Fund should focus on. She noted that in order to promote adolescent reproductive health, a comprehensive approach was essential and agreed that parents and other opinion-leaders should be involved in adolescent reproductive health education programmes. The outcome of such education programmes should not just be the promotion of safe sex but the teaching of responsible behaviour, including encouraging young people to delay sex. She added that together with UNICEF, the Fund had developed a parental guidance book on adolescent reproductive health; however, one problem was that not all parents in programme countries could read. She stated that the Fund would continue to work with UNICEF, WHO, NGOs and civil society to seek solutions and a pragmatic approach to dealing with the challenges of adolescent reproductive health. She congratulated the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran on its undertakings in that area, including the in-depth reproductive health education being provided to young couples who were about to marry. She noted that the Fund had provided support for sending representatives from neighbouring Muslim countries on study tours to the Islamic Republic of Iran, which, along with Bangladesh, had taken the lead in involving religious leaders in promoting reproductive health education.

28. She affirmed that the Fund was deeply committed to the UNDAF process; however, it was a very labour-intensive process and created constraints for a small organization such as UNFPA. She added that a rationalization of the process would be useful since it was not necessary for all organizations to participate in every activity. At the same time, it was necessary to use the UNDAF to ensure that the key areas of population, reproductive health and advocacy were included in the programmes of all member organizations. She added that national capacity-building was an important topic for the UNDAF and UNFPA had placed it on the agenda of the UNDG. Also, it was important to ensure that the guidelines and other products developed by the three ACC inter-agency task forces were fed into the UNDAF process. She noted that the issue of the delineation of the role of the resident coordinator and the resident representative would be discussed at the next meeting of the UNDG in the context of United Nations reform.

29. On the United Nations Foundation, she observed that for the next tranche of grants the Foundation had called for project proposals that focused on adolescent reproductive health and reproductive health quality of care, emphasizing collaborative activities to be undertaken with other organizations. She noted that the Fund was already involved in various collaborative activities, including with NGOs. The Fund was working jointly with UNIFEM and UNDP in supporting a campaign in the Latin America and the Caribbean region to prevent violence against women. UNFPA was also supporting very innovative activities with indigenous women. For example, a project on bilingual literacy based on reproductive health issues, initially developed as a pilot project in the Peruvian Andean region, was now being implemented on a national scope in Bolivia. In addition to promoting awareness among indigenous women concerning

their reproductive rights, training in negotiating skills was also being provided.

30. With regard to the query on the use of sterilization in countries in the Latin America region, she noted that the Fund had commissioned a study by AVSC International on that issue. The results, when available, could be shared with interested members of the Executive Board. Recourse to voluntary sterilization was indeed a widespread phenomenon in some countries in the region and was frequently linked to a lack of choice of contraceptives. She affirmed that promoting quality of care in the provision of reproductive health services, including counselling and contraceptive choice, was accorded high priority in the programmes supported by the Fund in the region. She noted that UNFPA had participated with the Pan-American Health Organization in a mission to address the issue of forced sterilization in Peru. Recommendations were made to the Government, which had begun to take action to prevent the use of coercion in the provision of reproductive health services.

31. In responding to several questions raised by one delegation, the Executive Director noted that the Fund was using the logical framework analysis. As regards interaction with the development banks, she noted that the Fund was continuing its collaboration with the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank and was in active dialogue with the African Development Bank. She added that while there had been dialogue with the Inter-American Bank there had been no real outcome. She noted that the upcoming round table on macroeconomic linkages would seek to involve finance ministers. With regard to the ICPD+5 technical meetings, she agreed that there should be a focus on results; for example, the technical meeting on international migration and development would focus on how to advance implementation of chapter 10 of the ICPD Programme of Action. She assured delegations that quality of care was a key concern of the ICPD+5 review.

32. She confirmed that the Fund would continue to focus on the issue of FGM as a priority area and would also continue its support for programmes on the prevention of gender-based violence. She noted that the Fund was launching a major campaign on FGM. In the area of HIV/AIDS prevention, she hoped that UNFPA could collaborate with the International Therapeutic Solidarity Fund. She noted that on a recent visit to Paris she had been informed by the Solidarity Fund of a short one-month treatment for pregnant women to reduce HIV transmission from mother to child. She observed that that could be a possible entry point for a joint intervention between UNFPA and the International Therapeutic Solidarity Fund. She also noted that UNFPA had further views on HIV/AIDS and maternal mortality reduction; however, the CCH might be a more appropriate forum to discuss them.

33. She noted that UNFPA would continue to expand its collaboration and cooperation with NGOs, the private sector and civil society. The Fund was focusing on strengthening NGO capacity and sustainability and had supported training for NGOs. Also, all UNFPA field offices had been directed to increase their collaboration with NGOs and civil society and to include them in programme policy discussions and training. Every year the Fund met with the NGO Advisory Committee that had been established by UNFPA as a follow-up to the ICPD. The Fund had also provided for NGOs to become more actively involved in the country programme process.

34. With regard to the budget, she stated that the administrative expenditures had not risen. The amount approved by the Executive Board was $139 million and the Fund had spent only $111 million, which represented a considerable savings of about 18 per cent. Noting that the budget was for a two-year period, she observed that in the future the Fund should not report on expenditures for only one year since it was misleading.

35. On the subject of emergency assistance and assistance to refugees, she pointed out that the Fund was collaborating with UNHCR and other organizations, including NGOs such as the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. She noted that at a future date she would like to organize an informal meeting with the Executive Board on the subject of emergency assistance. With regard to the query on UNFPA collaboration with UNDCP, she confirmed that such collaboration was ongoing; for example, the Fund had programmes with UNDCP in Kenya and Thailand. In response to another question, she observed that while there was no country-specific programme on adolescent reproductive health in Montserrat, there was a subregional programme that included training activities.

36. She observed that the Global Initiative on Contraceptive Requirements and Logistics Management Needs was a very successful global programme. Most recently, there had been a large need for contraceptives in Indonesia, in the amount of $29 million.

37. She agreed that the regional overview section of the annual report had used a descriptive approach and observed that the Fund would endeavour to be more analytical in the future. UNFPA was discussing with its partners how the needs emanating from the country programmes could be better linked to the regional and interregional programmes. An evaluation was also going to be undertaken.

38. With regard to advocacy, she noted that training had been provided for all field office staff, Country Support Teams (CSTs) and also for national staff and Government counterparts. UNFPA had also provided advocacy training for parliamentarians, including women parliamentarians from Africa. She noted that while the report of the Secretary-General on Africa had not included much on population and development, the Secretary-General himself was very receptive to advocating for those key areas.

39. The Executive Board took note of the report of the Executive Director for 1997 on programme priorities, programme effectiveness, statistical overview and regional overview (DP/FPA/1998/3 (Part I), (Part I/Add.1), (Part II) and (Part III)).

40. The Executive Board requested the Executive Director to submit to the Executive Board at its third regular session 1998 a conference room paper on sector-wide approaches.

III. ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES UTILIZATION

41. In response to Executive Board decision 96/27, the Fund had carried out a study on ways to help increase the absorptive capacity and financial resource utilization in UNFPA programme countries. The Report of the Executive Director on Absorptive Capacity and Resource Utilization in Programme Countries (DP/FPA/1998/4), which was before the Executive Board, was based on a number of sources, including a report commissioned by the Fund and undertaken by the consultancy firm of COWI, supported through funding from the Government of Denmark.

42. In introducing document DP/FPA/1998/4, the Deputy Executive Director (Programme) focused on the following: issues relating to absorptive capacity that were specific to population programmes and the work of UNFPA; issues that were relevant to development cooperation and operational activities more broadly, but were not restricted to the population sector; actions that UNFPA had already initiated in response to the study; and the commitment of programme countries themselves to address and solve the issues in spite of the many constraints that they faced. She noted that in many respects UNFPA assistance had been instrumental in building national capacity in the field of population, and the Fund's cooperation with programme countries had produced some notable results. Over the years, the Fund had done substantial work in training various types of population programme personnel and cadres. In fact, UNFPA was in the forefront in placing emphasis on training in all of its programmes of assistance and on building the capacity of training institutions in developing countries. The Fund's Technical Support Services (TSS) system and greater use of South-South cooperation were some of the innovations pioneered in support of training and institution-building. She stated that constraints such as the limited management capacity in programme countries, limited human resources and infrastructure in general, issues of civil service reform and decentralization, and funding of the social sector were common to most United Nations funds and programmes. UNFPA had already taken action in that regard by bringing the results of the absorptive capacity study to the attention of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG). UNDG would review the conclusions of the study, a step that was expected to lead to the development of common understanding and, where appropriate, common responses from the UNDG member organizations. UNFPA was also trying to make sure that in the UNDG and within the resident coordinator system there was greater understanding about, and common advocacy for, certain basic messages that all members of the UNDG should promote.

43. The Deputy Executive Director stated that the Fund had sharpened the focus on the management aspects of population programmes, by focusing more explicitly on such issues in the country programme development and programming process, through, inter alia, the introduction of certain new programming tools such as the logical framework analysis and stakeholder analysis. The Fund's TSS system had also been refocused to pay more attention to assessing and strengthening the management capacity of various national partners. Another related development was the revision of all UNFPA programming guidelines, which had been completed in 1997. Notably, the revised guidelines put into practice full decentralization of programming authority. Also under way was the revision of the Fund's financial monitoring system. The recommendations on indicators and advocacy contained in the study on absorptive capacity were also being addressed

by UNFPA, and the Fund was already placing greater emphasis on advocacy at all levels, in particular at the country level. Referring to the study's recommendation on expansion of collaboration with NGOs, she noted that in principle the Fund agreed with those suggestions; however, the Fund believed that a cautious approach was needed to help ensure that NGOs had the required capacity to sustain and expand activities. At the same time, it was important to ensure that NGOs complemented the activities supported by the Government. Clearly, the Fund's record in working with civil society spoke for itself, particularly as compared with the rest of the United Nations system. However, the Fund accepted that there were specific cases of countries where UNFPA could be even more active in strengthening collaboration with civil society. Concerning the recommendations on national execution, UNFPA was gratified that the study had recognized that the past approach of the Fund had been the correct one. The study had also noted the burden that the expansion of national execution placed on UNFPA field offices. In that respect, the Fund agreed fully with the recommendation regarding the strengthening of its field offices.

44. The Deputy Executive Director underscored the need to recognize fully the complexity of the situations where UNFPA programmes operated and the constraints that the Fund faced, many of which it had little control over. She noted that, for example, the COWI study had not emphasized enough the point that capacity-building was a long-term endeavour and, thus, neither donors nor recipients should look for quick results. Also, the matter of absorptive capacity was often not specific to population programmes. Thus, many of the issues raised by the study required the concerted effort of all partners, and not just the United Nations funds and programmes. She noted that the Fund's past efforts at building capacity had been constrained by problems with staff retention in the public sector and the lack of sustainability of institutions; those were not problems that UNFPA could address alone. A number of those issues could be tackled through the UNDG mechanism while others required the collaboration of all development partners, including bilateral donors. She reiterated that, ultimately, Governments had the responsibility of coordinating external inputs; more often than not, UNFPA, a relatively minor player in national population programmes, could not assume that role and could only aid a Government in coordinating assistance at its request. It could, however, serve a very useful role in forging links between the governmental and NGO sectors, and in defusing any apprehension that might exist on either side regarding such collaboration.

45. During the discussion that followed, several delegations agreed that, as indicated in the COWI study, the lack of management skills was the single largest constraint to the absorptive capacity of countries and to their ability to carry out effective population programmes. National capacity-building was essential to increasing the absorptive capacity of countries. In that regard, delegations emphasized the importance of training and underscored the need for UNFPA to focus on training national staff and developing their skills and competencies to plan, manage, monitor and evaluate population programmes and projects. One delegation observed that local or regional training of trainers was a key to ensuring capacity-building and to putting in place a sustainable training programme. The same delegation pointed out that the proliferation of the Internet in developing countries provided a means for donor countries to make their management tools available and accessible to developing country counterparts. Another delegation asked what were the plans to increase the

management capacity of government staff. One delegation expressed concern about the inadequate capacity of some countries to collect and process data. The delegation requested UNFPA to focus attention on strengthening that capacity. Another delegation suggested that UNFPA should help to improve government processes through concepts such as continuous quality improvement, which included improving performance by improving job descriptions, designing a better reward and incentive system, ensuring the availability of basic supplies and commodities, and converting supervisory visits into problem-solving sessions or quality checks instead of administrative visits. Two delegations stated that the issue of absorptive capacity should not be used as a pretext to withhold funds from programme countries. The importance of resource mobilization was also stressed.

46. Numerous delegations agreed that capacity-building was a long-term process and inter-agency coordination was essential for enabling it. One delegation, while concurring, stated that it was important to identify several stages of programme or institutional capacity-building and to develop indicators for each stage in order to monitor progress over the years. The same delegation stated that in addition to the approach suggested in paragraph 59 of document DP/FPA/1998/4, other possibilities existed to improve coordination. For example, the Government of Ethiopia, together with various donors, had recently pilot-tested a home page to improve coordination among donors and the Government. The home page included the strategies, goals and objectives of each key player in the country, country programmes, budgets and trip reports. Another delegation stated that in addition to inter-agency cooperation there should also be inter-delegation cooperation. One delegation observed that besides strengthening the capacity of government institutions, the Fund should also help to maximize the capacity that already existed in the public sector, within civil society or NGOs, or in the commercial private sector. Another delegation amplified on that point, noting that in addition to the capacity-building of Governments and NGOs, UNFPA should support the capacity-building and empowerment of its own staff, including through training for programme and financial management. One delegation stated that it would like to recommend a mechanism separate from the Fund's current approach for the allocation of resources to country programmes for the improvement of absorptive capacity.

47. Many delegations welcomed the development of indicators and noted their importance for measuring achievements in reproductive health, as well as in measuring programme management capacities. One delegation noted that in addition to national and global indicators it was essential to have tailor-made indicators at the programme level for effective monitoring. Several delegations noted that many of the issues raised in the report were common to all UNDG partners and recommended that issues such as capacity-building, indicators, logical framework analysis and streamlining of reporting requirements should be discussed and considered jointly in the context of UNDG and UNDAF. One delegation requested that the results of the UNDAF review be made available to the Executive Board. Another delegation noted that the UNDAF review would be made available in other United Nations forums.

48. Several delegations underlined the importance of promoting national execution and cooperation with NGOs and noted that UNFPA should adopt a flexible and pragmatic approach to national execution. One delegation, while agreeing

that it was important to promote national execution and cooperation with NGOs, underscored that the Fund should not bypass national Governments. Another delegation reiterated a finding of the COWI study that UNFPA was overly governmental in its focus and did not sufficiently explore collaboration with NGOs and other non-governmental actors. It also requested more information be provided in the next annual report on the Fund's collaboration with NGOs. The same delegation also drew attention to the COWI study suggestion that since in many countries UNFPA had very limited resources it should serve as a facilitator for larger donors. Many delegations underscored the importance of the Fund's participation in the sector investment programmes (SIPs) and welcomed the fact that UNFPA had been in discussions with the World Bank and other bilateral donors on that subject. The delegations concurred with the Fund's view that reproductive health concerns were not suitably addressed in the SIPs.

49. One delegation stated that the TSS system should be developed to respond even more effectively to needs at the country level. Another delegation expressed concern that HIV/AIDS prevention was not adequately addressed by the CSTs. One delegation noted that it attached great importance to backstopping by the TSS and that it supported UNFPA efforts to co-sponsor programmes with the World Bank. Another delegation stressed the importance of UNFPA being able to access the right kind of skills and expertise it needed from outside sources. One delegation asked if South-South cooperation activities were being supported by the Fund in the area of absorptive capacity and added that UNFPA should be more innovative in its approach to South-South cooperation. Another delegation noted that the Fund should consider going beyond existing formal structures for South-South cooperation, adding that its Government had been successful in supporting same-country NGO-to-Ministry of Health technical assistance and had also introduced management and supervision concepts from Indonesia to Bangladesh to Kenya using local consultants from each country.

50. Citing subparagraph (g) of paragraph 71, one delegation recommended that the Fund should also work towards harmonization of its own reporting requirements with those of other agencies so that the reporting burden on programme countries would be reduced. The same delegation also underscored the importance of creating a sense of ownership and partnership in programme countries through integrating planning, implementation and follow-up in the structures that existed in the respective country. Other delegations echoed the important need for donors to harmonize their administrative and reporting requirements. One delegation, citing the same subparagraph, advised the Fund to be cautious in its approach. It also encouraged the Fund to work with UNDP in that area. Another delegation observed that the operational proposals in section V of document DP/FPA/1998/4 were too general and should be fleshed out. The delegation underscored that sustainability was the core issue in capacity development and it was essential to change from a provider mentality to one of partnership. Several delegations reiterated the need for UNFPA to strengthen its field offices and, inter alia, to use local expertise to do so. Numerous delegations endorsed the recommendations contained in the report, and some noted that they looked forward to receiving, at a later date, an update of the implementation of recommendations in the report.

51. In her reply, the Deputy Executive Director (Programme) thanked the delegations for their encouraging comments and suggestions. She assured

delegations that the lack of absorptive capacity was not used as a pretext to reduce resources to programme countries. She agreed on the importance of empowering national staff through capacity-building, including increased training in management skills. She also agreed that it was important for UNFPA to pursue participation in the SIPs. With regard to collaboration with NGOs, she noted that NGOs were actively involved in the Fund's country programmes, including as executing agencies. At the same time, it was important to bear in mind that as an intergovernmental organization, UNFPA had to act in concert with the Government. She agreed that in some countries further efforts could be undertaken to increase NGO involvement. She pointed out that with the new guidelines and the subprogramme approach, there was a greater emphasis on anchoring programmes locally and involving all stakeholders, including NGOs and civil society, in the programme design and analysis. Also, the Fund had supported activities to strengthen NGO capacities and sustainability. She noted that many of the Fund's procedures had been simplified to facilitate collaboration with NGOs and that financial reporting procedures would also be simplified. She asked if simplification of procedures was also being discussed in the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC) and whether it might be possible to harmonize the United Nations system procedures and those of the bilateral agencies. She observed that efforts were already under way to increase the involvement of CSTs in HIV/AIDS-prevention programmes, including through adjusting job descriptions. She affirmed that the TSS system had been set up to respond to country needs. The TSS advisers had been asked to develop lessons learned and best practices to be shared widely, including on such topics as male involvement in reproductive health.

52. With regard to South-South cooperation, she noted that the Fund's activities did indeed go beyond existing formal structures. The Fund was supporting a wide range of South-South activities, including some with NGOs. She added that field office staff had been instructed to make wider use of South-South cooperation and to make funds available for such activities. She agreed with the point that indicators needed to be both adjusted locally and related to various stages of development. She noted that the Fund was reviewing the COWI manual on assessing national capacity in population programmes and observed that it would have to be considered in line with the Fund's own policies and guidelines. While agreeing that the Fund's field offices had to be strengthened both in terms of quality and quantity, the Deputy Executive Director noted that field staff were undergoing training to increase their skills and capacities. For example, in recent years 102 staff from 90 field offices had been given financial management training; more than 50 per cent of those trained were from offices in Africa. She also agreed that the UNFPA representatives had to be further empowered to participate in the SIPs. Concurring that capacity-building was a gradual and long-term process that had to be accomplished in collaboration with other development partners, she pointed out that frequently several other actions had to precede capacity-building, including the building of various structures in-country. She stressed that the aim was to increase national execution but she agreed that it was necessary to take a flexible approach. She appreciated the suggestions offered by delegations regarding increased use of the Internet and the ability to obtain skills and expertise as needed and noted that it would be important first to canvass for local skills before looking outside. She noted that the Fund had

developed performance indicators in its three programme priority areas and also on capacity-building and those were included in the guidelines. She observed that the indicators should be regarded as work-in-progress that would be refined over time.

53. The Executive Director noted that UNFPA had undertaken a consultancy in-house to study the issue of financial reporting and she hoped to present the results to the Executive Board at an informal meeting at a later point. The Fund was ready to implement the recommendations of the study. With regard to the SIPs, she stated that the Fund was in touch with the World Bank and had held discussions on the subject. The World Bank agreed that the SIP guidelines on health did not adequately include the area of reproductive health and had suggested that UNFPA work with the World Bank to strengthen that area. She added that the Fund also needed to participate in health sector reform and to ensure the inclusion of reproductive health. She observed that those issues would be included in the conference room paper that the Fund would prepare on sector-wide approaches. Responding to the query on HIV/AIDS, she noted that the Fund was an active co-sponsor of the Joint United Nations Programme on AIDS (UNAIDS) and was supporting HIV/AIDS-prevention activities in 132 countries. Although the Fund might not be able to undertake everything in the area of HIV/AIDS prevention, it endeavoured to incorporate such activities, to the extent possible, in its population and reproductive health programmes. Concerning the role of the resident coordinator, the Executive Director stated that the resident coordinator had a highly important role in promoting advocacy and coordination at the country level. UNFPA had supported a training module on ICPD follow-up that was used in the resident coordinator training at the United Nations Staff College in Turin, Italy. The guidelines and other products produced by the ACC Task Force on Basic Social Services for All were also being used by the Turin Centre for training resident coordinators. Similarly, the UNDAF process also sought to inculcate a collaborative and coordinated approach among members of the United Nations country team, through orientation and training. In that regard, she noted that more needed to be done to ensure the inclusion of population and reproductive health issues in those training programmes. Also, further efforts were needed to ensure that all United Nations staff became advocates for ICPD, its key issues, and those emerging from the other recent United Nations global conferences.

54. The Executive Board adopted the following decision.

98/10. UNFPA: Absorptive capacity

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Executive Director on absorptive capacity and financial resource utilization in programme countries (DP/FPA/1998/4);

2. Also takes note of the importance of South/South cooperation in enhancing absorptive capacity;

3. Further takes note of the need to enhance, where appropriate, the role of civil society organizations and the private sector;

4. Endorses the actions already taken to increase the absorptive capacity and resource utilization in programme countries, including, inter alia, training and the issuance and implementation of the new UNFPA Policies and Procedures Manual;

5. Endorses the recommendations for further developing absorptive capacity and resource utilization in programme countries contained in document DP/FPA/1998/4;

6. Urges the Executive Director to take the steps necessary to implement the recommendations contained in document DP/FPA/1998/4, bearing in mind the comments made by delegations at the 1998 annual session;

7. Requests the Executive Director to report to the Executive Board on follow-up to the recommendations contained in document DP/FPA/1998/4 at its third regular session 2000.

12 June 1998

IV. WORK PLAN AND REQUEST FOR PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE AUTHORITY

55. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) introduced the two reports before the Executive Board: Work plan for 1999-2002 and request for programme expenditure authority (DP/FPA/1998/5); and Status of financial implementation of country programmes and projects approved by the Governing Council and the Executive Board (DP/FPA/1998/8). He highlighted the most salient points of the three main components of the report on the work plan, namely, the resource situation and utilization in 1997; the projected income and the proposed utilization of programme resources; and the programme expenditure authority of the Executive Director for 1999. He stated that in view of the extensive discussions with Executive Board members during the preceding two days, particularly on the resource mobilization strategy, the Fund agreed that the income assumption for 1998, on which the work plan was based, should be adjusted. That would affect the projected income for 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 although the Fund proposed to maintain the annual growth in income of 7 per cent. UNFPA now assumed an income from regular resources, including contributions from private foundations, for 1998 of $310 million, including the increases in contributions announced earlier in the week by Finland and China and the announcement by Japan that it would use a fixed exchange rate favourable to UNFPA in order to minimize the influence of the exchange rate on its contribution. That yielded an income estimate from regular resources for the four-year period of 1999-2002 of $1,474 million, i.e., $45 million less than the original estimate. The Fund would maintain the estimates of multi-bilateral resources at $100 million for the work plan 1999-2002. A revised table E was distributed to the Board with the new figures. The Deputy Executive Director proposed that the programme resource figures as contained in paragraph 19 be modified accordingly. In particular, the request for approval of the 1999 programme expenditure authority should be $263 million instead of $271 million

as originally requested. He then referred to document DP/FPA/1998/8 and noted that it was an informational report that presented financial data showing the degree of timeliness of the implementation of country programmes and projects. The report revealed that UNFPA was on target with delivering the amount from regular resources in its country programmes although the Fund needed additional resources in order to deliver the total amount combining regular and other resources.

56. During the discussion that followed, several delegations expressed their appreciation for the work done by UNFPA in promptly reformulating a work plan based on updated donor commitments and for revising figures to reflect that. Most delegations agreed with the income assumption of an annual rate of growth of 7 per cent for the work plan period 1999-2002, and stated that the Fund needed to be both bold and optimistic. Some delegations stated that they were in favour of a more realistic approach based on a less ambitious estimate. One delegation, also speaking on behalf of another, stressed the need for a more realistic approach to planning. The delegation underscored that the work plan and request for programme expenditure authority was not an advocacy (fund-raising) document but a planning tool for financial and programming purposes with appropriate expenditure approval authority. The same delegation expressed concern about the methodology of projecting the rate of income growth based on the average recorded over the last 10 years. The delegation proposed that the Executive Board should consider the establishment of a prospective approach based on an analysis of, on the one hand, the growth of donor contributions, and on the other hand, the parity of the dollar. Concerning the work plan for 1999-2002, the delegation pointed out that in view of the decline in core resources during the previous two years, the projected annual rate of increase should not be higher than 5 per cent, which was the result given by the current methodology. One delegation emphasized that in order to attract greater resources it was necessary to use optimistic rather than pessimistic income assumptions. Several other delegations concurred with that viewpoint. Several delegations, citing table H in document DP/FPA/1998/5, stated that they agreed with the intended distribution of resources to the four geographical regions. Some delegations stated that resource allocations to Africa should be increased as there were a large number of category A countries in that region. Other delegations stated that the Asia and the Pacific region should not be neglected as there were many category A countries in that region and Asia had a far larger population than Africa. Several delegations were pleased to note that the amount of the carry-forward of programmable resources from 1997 to 1998 had been reduced and that no carry-forward was projected from 1998 to 1999. Many delegations also welcomed the fact that the resource utilization ratio in 1997 increased to 95 per cent from 90 per cent in 1996. One delegation stated that the Fund's operational reserve was too high and that decision 93/28 should be revisited with a view to seeing 20 per cent as a ceiling rather than as an absolute norm, or fixing a cap at an amount judged reasonable by the Board. The same delegation asked why the operational reserve in 1997 had been 21.7 per cent when the Fund's income had declined in that year. A few other delegations also observed that the operational reserve appeared to be too high. Some delegations asked for clarification on the $20 million from private foundations: two delegations asked if that income was limited only to 1998 or was renewable; another delegation asked how the income termed "supplementary" resources and listed under regular resources differed from multi-bilateral resources. One

delegation asked why $27 million figured in the income for 1997 if it had not been received in that year. The same delegation also asked how UNFPA planned to cover the administrative costs resulting from the additional multi-bilateral funds.

57. One delegation suggested recasting the work plan as less an expenditure approval formality and more a statement of strategic direction and related planning for the coming four years with the inclusion of likely funding scenarios necessary to achieve a specific set of aims and objectives. Such a work plan might be of general value to UNFPA in raising resources and would also be useful to donors whose internal resource allocation decisions depended on the consideration of competing bids from a variety of sources. Thus, a forward-looking, output-focused work plan linked to various funding scenarios could serve as a persuasive resource mobilization tool. Another delegation, while agreeing that the work plan should be developed as a strategic planning tool, observed that the allocations to the administrative budget should be reduced and UNFPA should be able to handle increased resources without having to augment the administrative budget in the same proportion. Another delegation also emphasized that the proportion of administrative costs of projected increased resources should decrease over time in order for more resources to be made available for programme work. Several delegations pointed out that ICPD+5 provided opportunities to increase funding. Numerous delegations also reiterated the need for a sustainable and predictable funding strategy for UNFPA that would not hold the Fund hostage to uncertainty. One delegation stated that multi-year pledges were necessary to assure predictability and growth in funding.

58. At the conclusion of the discussion, one delegation noted that of the Fund's top 10 donors who had made interventions, seven were comfortable with the income assumption of an annual growth rate of 7 per cent. The delegation underscored the significance of that, since those seven donors represented over 80 per cent of the contributions made to the Fund.

59. In his reply, the Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) thanked the delegations for their positive comments and welcomed the suggestion that in the future the work plan should be a strategic and forward-looking document including how the Fund would make use of additional resources. While pointing out that the work plan was a four-year rolling plan that was revised annually, he noted that since it was a dynamic planning tool, it was necessary to be optimistic with regard to the annual growth rate of income. He noted the concern expressed by some delegations regarding the need to increase distribution of resources to the Africa and the Asia and the Pacific regions. With regard to the query on the income from private sources, he observed that the Fund believed it to be sustainable, especially since UNFPA had been the recipient of the largest grant from the first tranche of funds distributed by the United Nations Foundation. He stated that the private-sector contribution was treated as part of regular resources since the funds were used for approved country programme activities. In the future, the Fund would also review how to use multi-bilateral resources as it felt that those resources should be treated in the same way. He noted that the country programmes approved by the Board had multi-bilateral resource components.

60. With regard to the operational reserve, the Deputy Executive Director agreed that it should be revisited while pointing out that in the meantime UNFPA was bound by decision 93/28 to maintain the reserve at 20 per cent of income. He noted that in the past, on a few occasions, UNFPA had had to draw down from the reserve. Nevertheless, the Fund would be pleased to discuss the issue of the operational reserve further, either informally or formally. He added that UNFPA would check and respond later to the query on the reserve having been 21.7 per cent of income in 1997. Responding to another question on multi-bilateral resources about the amount of $27 million, he noted that it had been pledged by the European Union but had not been received by the end of 1997 and hence was a part of the carry-forward. He observed that current financial rules regarding multi-bilateral resources did not allow project activities to commence until the funds had been received. He added that given an unpredictable resource situation and untimely payment of contributions, carry-forwards were unavoidable. He agreed with the delegations who had pointed out that the ICPD+5 process provided opportunities to increase resources for the Fund.

61. The Executive Board adopted the following decision.

98/11. UNFPA work plan for 1999-2002 and programme expenditure authority

The Executive Board

1. Notes programme resource planning proposals of the Executive Director as set out in document DP/FPA/1998/5 and as revised by the Deputy Executive Director at the annual session 1998;

2. Approves the request for 1999 programme expenditure authority at a level equal to expected new programmable resources for 1999, currently estimated at $263 million, and requests the Executive Director to report to the Executive Board on any significant increases or shortfalls in estimated income for the year 1999;

3. Notes the following estimates of new programmable resources from regular resources for programme planning for the period 2000-2002: $283 million for 2000; $303 million for 2001; and $325 million for 2002;

4. Requests the Executive Director to take steps to evolve the work plan into a more focused, analytical and outcome-orientated document;

5. Invites the Executive Director in formulating the work plan for 2000-2003 to increase the proportion of programmable resources.

12 June 1998

62. The Executive Board took note of the report on the status of financial implementation of country programmes and projects approved by the Governing Council and the Executive Board (DP/FPA/1998/8).

V. PERIODIC REPORT ON EVALUATION

63. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) introduced the Periodic Report on Evaluation Activities (DP/FPA/1998/6), which had been prepared in response to Governing Council decisions 82/20 and 90/35, and which focused on evaluation activities undertaken in 1997 and provided information on how evaluation results had been used in UNFPA programming. She noted that all UNFPA-supported projects had built-in requirements for internal evaluations, which were increasingly being supplemented by external evaluations. An important evaluation completed in 1997 assessed the experience with various modalities for executing UNFPA-supported programmes. The evaluation had identified a set of criteria for assessing potential executing agencies and those had been issued by UNFPA in the form of a checklist for use in the process of programme development in defining, implementing and executing modalities. She stated that UNFPA was continuing its efforts to define performance indicators in the Fund's three priority areas and the selection of those indicators in relation to each programme would be based on the purposes of the programme, as well as realities in terms of data availability. She concluded by underscoring the Fund's commitment to the principle of accountability to its donors, to the Board and to its partners in programme countries.

64. During the ensuing discussion, several delegations commended the report for its content and structure and welcomed the Fund's increased commitment to monitoring and evaluation and to applying the lessons learned from evaluations to strengthen and improve strategies and programmes. A number of delegations suggested that the Fund should increase the number of external evaluations as well as undertake joint evaluations with other organizations. Several delegations noted that they would welcome receiving as many of the thematic evaluation reports as possible. Noting that the thematic evaluations were very useful, one delegation stated that the results of those evaluations should be fed back to the whole system and not just to the target countries. Many delegations expressed interest in learning about the findings and outcomes of the thematic evaluation on Safe Motherhood programmes and on the integration of HIV/AIDS and reproductive health activities. One delegation inquired if the latter would look at the role of social marketing in the prevention of HIV/AIDS. Another delegation noted that impact studies on HIV/AIDS-prevention activities would help to increase the level of support from its country, which attached high importance to HIV/AIDS prevention. One delegation, observing that no country from southern Africa had been included in the thematic evaluation on HIV/AIDS-prevention activities, noted that at least one country from the region should be included, given the enormity of the epidemic in that part of the world. Another delegation stated that its country had undertaken a number of ground-breaking efforts in the area of evaluation of HIV/AIDS programmes and that in the future it would keep UNFPA informed of such efforts. The same delegation noted that in a number of countries, including Bolivia, Madagascar and Nicaragua, its Government and UNFPA had jointly supported national-level population and service facility-level data collection that had been useful in the evaluation of UNFPA programmes. The delegation hoped that such collaboration would continue.

65. Several delegations welcomed the work undertaken by the Fund to develop population and reproductive health indicators. One delegation asked how those

indicators related to the core indicators developed by DAC to measure follow-up to the United Nations global conferences. The same delegation added that the evaluation report for the following year should include a compliance report on evaluation. It also noted a declining trend in support to advocacy. Another delegation inquired as to what steps would be taken to ensure the availability of good data, vis-à-vis the indicators that had been developed. Some delegations suggested that greater attention should be focused on impact analysis and on results rather than on process. One delegation offered its assistance to the Fund for the conduct of synthesis work and impact analysis and asked for additional information on the impact of UNFPA support with regard to the reduction of maternal mortality and the training of traditional birth attendants.

66. Another delegation, citing paragraphs 8-10 of the report, stated that weaknesses in managerial aspects were not unique to UNFPA but were also visible in UNDP and UNICEF; thus, it would be fruitful to discuss those issues in the context of UNDG and UNDAF. The same delegation asked what mechanism was used in the selection of consultants and noted that tenders for consultancy services would make for greater transparency. One delegation, referring to paragraph 7, asked why there had been no systematic evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of national institutions and external agencies and requested an explanation regarding the delay in disbursement of funds mentioned in paragraph 25. Another delegation, citing paragraph 8, emphasized that capacity-building at the NGO level should be paralleled by capacity-building at the government level. One delegation stressed the important capacity- and institution-building role that the Fund needed to play. Another delegation welcomed the evaluation of intercountry South-South cooperation activities discussed in paragraph 39 of the report and expressed the hope that the report of the following year would also include evaluations of in-country South-South cooperation activities. Another delegation stressed the need to identify and improve the public administration gaps found in countries. One delegation asked if the subject of evaluations in the context of sector-wide approaches had been discussed.

67. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) thanked the delegations for their positive comments and suggestions. On the subject of indicators and data availability, she emphasized that the indicators selected should be practical and of the type for which data could be gathered without imposing heavy burdens on countries. While it was important to have certain standard indicators, that might be feasible only at national and global levels since there was frequently a need to adjust indicators at local levels. With regard to the DAC indicators, she noted that while UNFPA was not normally invited to the DAC meetings, there were links between the DAC indicators and those developed by the ACC Task Force on Basic Social Services for All, chaired by UNFPA. Responding to the point raised about the declining trend on advocacy, she pointed out that the statistics on advocacy did not in fact convey the full picture as most of the UNFPA-supported programmes on reproductive health and population and development strategies also included advocacy components. With regard to the suggestion about a compliance report, she noted that while it would be possible to report on evaluations the following year, the report could not be termed a compliance report since external evaluations of country programmes had not been mandatory until the recent issuance of new guidelines. Given that country programmes were

for a four- or five-year period, compliance could be judged only at the end of such a period. She noted that greater use would be made of the UNFPA Country Support Teams and the field offices to conduct evaluations.

68. She agreed that it was important to report the findings and outcomes of evaluations to the Executive Board and that certain areas - for example, gender - were well-suited to joint evaluations; however, evaluations would not be practical or cost-effective for every small project. She observed that external evaluations were carried out by persons not involved in the programme design or implementation. Responding to the query on South-South cooperation, she noted that the new guidelines required reporting from each programme and subprogramme on activities and outcomes in such areas as South-South cooperation and gender. She clarified that the references in paragraphs 10 and 34-39 were to interregional projects. She took note of the suggestions on collaboration made by one delegation and stated that the Fund would follow up on those suggestions. She noted that the point about evaluations in relationship to the sector-wide approaches was important and thus it was an area that needed to be looked at carefully. Both donors and programme countries would need to ensure built-in evaluations and that would be one area where joint evaluations would be useful. With regard to the point about managerial weakness, she agreed that it went beyond what any one organization could achieve alone and the Fund had put the issue on the agenda of the UNDG. She stated that with the use of the logical framework analysis, recognition of the importance of monitoring and evaluation as a package would increasingly permeate the thinking of all staff.

69. The Chief, Office of Oversight and Evaluation (OOE), stated that with the issuance of the new guidelines, analysis of the country programmes should become routinized and the OOE planned annual syntheses of such evaluation results and findings, which could be made available to Executive Board members. She noted that the reports of thematic evaluations were shared with the Fund's development partners and distributed to the missions in New York. The reports on the evaluation of adolescent reproductive health programmes and on the training programmes for traditional birth attendants had been made available at the annual session 1997 of the Board; however, additional copies could also be provided on request. She cautioned against mixing up project and programme level evaluations, noting that at the project level built-in evaluations were emphasized and at the programme level there was a need for a clear record of lessons learned and achievements from cycle to cycle. She took note of the suggestions on joint evaluations and observed that such exercises were not easy to mount and it would be important to ensure value-added in each case. The Chief, OOE, added that she welcomed any monitoring and evaluation experiences that Executive Board members might wish to share with UNFPA, including those on joint exercises. She observed that the OOE was not the only unit in the Fund managing evaluations, as country programme and project evaluations were managed by the geographical divisions and interregional project evaluations were managed by the Technical and Policy Division.

70. Responding to the query on the evaluations of national institutions and external agencies, she noted that in the past evaluations there had not been an agreed set of criteria for assessing potential executing agencies; those had now been developed, however. Regarding the delay in disbursements of funds referred to in paragraph 25, she pointed out that the delay had been due to the fact that

some organizations were not decentralized and every item had first to be referred to headquarters. She stated that so far no tenders had been used to recruit consultants for conducting evaluations because of the need to ensure gender and geographical balance in evaluation teams, in addition to the complement of needed expertise. She regretted that no country of southern Africa had been included in the thematic evaluation of HIV/AIDS programmes but added that the selection criteria had been the content and magnitude of the UNFPA programme in the country. In addition, UNFPA support of HIV/AIDS-related activities in southern Africa was too recent to be evaluated. She outlined some of the findings that had emerged from the country case studies. On staff training, she noted that the Fund would be sending two field staff members to a pilot training course organized by UNDP in Pakistan, on monitoring and evaluation in results-based management.

71. The Executive Board adopted the following decision.

98/12. UNFPA: Evaluation

The Executive Board

1. Welcomes the report of the Executive Director on United Nations Population Fund evaluation activities (DP/FPA/1998/6) and the progress made by the United Nations Population Fund in revising its monitoring and evaluation guidelines, which emphasize effectiveness and outputs;

2. Encourages the United Nations Population Fund to continue its efforts to enhance the analytical content of the periodic report on evaluation activities, particularly in regard to outcomes, achievements and lessons learned;

3. Requests the Executive Director actively to seek opportunities to undertake joint evaluations, where appropriate, with partner organizations and Governments;

4. Also requests that efforts be made to increase further the percentage of external evaluations and to continue to report to the Executive Board on progress made towards this objective in the periodic report on evaluation activities;

5. Requests the Executive Director to include in the periodic report on evaluation activities, starting in the year 2000, an annex providing a record and analysis of evaluation compliance for all country programmes completed in the previous biennium in line with the evaluation work plan of the United Nations Population Fund.

12 June 1998

VI. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

72. In accordance with decision 97/13, the Director of the Information and External Relations Division (IERD) presented an oral report on the implementation of decision 97/13 on the Fund's information and communication strategy. In accordance with the request of Executive Board members at the informal session in May 1998, the oral report had been made available in written form on the opening day of the annual session. In his oral presentation, the Director highlighted the information and communication strategy being implemented at programme and international levels. He noted that UNFPA information and communication materials under each country programme were unique to that country and were designed to reflect the needs and priorities of each country and each programme, including the need for materials in local languages. To promote the goals of the ICPD, the Fund worked with all its allies, including Governments, NGOs, civil society and the private sector. In donor countries, the Fund targeted decision makers, parliamentarians and the general public. The Fund's goal was to move each group from understanding, to commitment, to action. Each field office had an advocacy plan based on the situation of that country and guided by the following imperatives: What was the issue? Who was the target audience? What was the message? Who were the allies? What were the tools to be used?

73. The Director, IERD, pointed out that several examples of successful activities undertaken by the Fund were included in the recent publication UNFPA at Work, which had been distributed at the second regular session 1998 of the Executive Board and was also available at the current session. One activity that had proved very successful at the programme-country level was the use of nationally known Goodwill Ambassadors, as, for example, Safia El-Emary, who had been very active in Egypt and was also helping in Lebanon. The work of the Fund's Goodwill Ambassadors at the international level continued to provide much favourable publicity for the Fund and its work. The work of supermodel Waris Dirie in combating female genital mutilation had generated considerable press attention in many donor countries, especially in Europe and the United States of America. Film star Keiko Kishi had initiated a fund-raising campaign in Japan asking each citizen to contribute 100 yen to the work of the Fund and had been instrumental in working out an agreement with All Nippon Airlines to be the Fund's official carrier, which included showing a video produced by UNFPA and requesting donations from passengers. Other Special Ambassadors recruited to represent UNFPA and NGOs in individual donor countries included Goedele Liekens in Belgium, Mikko Kuustonen in Finland, Carrie Crowley in Ireland, Cattis Ahlstrom in Sweden and Magenta Devine in the United Kingdom.

74. The Director noted that political will was essential to ensure that Governments around the world moved from understanding, to commitment, to action with regard to population and reproductive health issues. Official development assistance (ODA) was declining but the Fund remained committed to promoting and advocating for universal reproductive health, gender equity and equality and women's empowerment. The main constraints the Fund faced in implementing its information and communication strategy were insufficient funding and staffing and the fact that UNFPA was considered controversial. In terms of advertisements and promotionals, it cost $350 million to introduce a new household product in Europe. To air a 30-second advertisement on television in

the United States of America cost about $20,000. To place 25 to 30 posters in subway and train stations in each of the European Union member countries for between one to three months cost about $1.5 million. UNFPA had a very small staff to run its media and advocacy campaigns, prepare and produce information materials and do fund-raising. Too often the Fund was required to be reactive rather than proactive because of the controversy surrounding certain population and reproductive health issues. Frequently, the Fund had to contend with the lies and organized campaigns of its opponents. Several Governments had asked UNFPA to assist them in defending themselves and the Fund in the face of such controversies. Nevertheless, the Fund remained firmly committed to promoting and implementing the ICPD Programme of Action. The Director concluded by affirming that, as stated by the Executive Director, each UNFPA staff member was an advocate and committed to the Fund's mandate and mission, which was supported by the 179 nations that created and endorsed the ICPD Programme of Action. The Director welcomed the guidance and support of the Executive Board and stated that UNFPA was greatly encouraged by the Board's commitment to assist with the Fund's resource mobilization efforts.

75. Numerous delegations expressed their appreciation for the clarity and quality of the report and commended UNFPA for its commitment and work in the area of information, communication and advocacy. One delegation stated that it was intrigued by the systematic fashion in which the report presented the clear linkages between the target audience, the tools of communication and the messages. Many delegations noted that in spite of a small staff, the Fund had achieved a great deal. Several delegations underscored the importance of advocacy in raising awareness about population issues, ICPD and UNFPA, and emphasized the importance of seeking alliances with NGOs, the private sector and other United Nations agencies and organizations. One delegation, while asking whether UNFPA cooperated with UNDP, UNICEF and UNAIDS in the area of information and communication, noted that part of the success obtained by UNICEF was through a network of national offices and UNFPA should also have such a network. Several delegations commended the use of Goodwill Ambassadors and Special Ambassadors and suggested increased use of nationally famous stars and the mass media to promote ICPD and raise public awareness about population issues. One delegation offered to assist the Special Ambassador in Ireland and also took note of the need for donor support for public service announcements. Another delegation, while noting that the work of the Special Ambassador in its own country was becoming increasingly well known, proposed that the Special Ambassadors be invited to attend an Executive Board session in 1998 or in 1999.

76. One delegation underscored the need to continue to sustain efforts in the campaign against FGM. The same delegation, while expressing appreciation for donor efforts in programme countries to implement the information and communication strategy, stated that Member States should join hands to support the Fund and there should be a pooling of efforts in order to sensitize people and raise awareness about population and reproductive health issues. Another delegation stated that it was important to distinguish between advocacy for ICPD and UNFPA and advocacy for fund-raising. One delegation asked how the Fund, in its advocacy efforts, struck a balance between the two sides on the abortion issue.

77. Another delegation, citing paragraph 5 of decision 97/13, requested additional information on the impact measurement of information and communication activities. The delegation also referred to the importance of maintaining linguistic balance in the electronic dissemination of information, as called for in decision 97/13, and expressed regret that currently the UNFPA Web site was available only in English. The delegation stated that the Web site should also be made available in French. Another delegation concurred that there should be linguistic balance in the electronic dissemination of information. The same delegation inquired about the Fund's internal communication at headquarters, with the field and with its development partners. The delegation added that the communication strategy should have been tied to the setting out of UNFPA priority issues for 1998 (see DP/1998/13). Also, information should be provided on activities, the budget and progress to date.

78. One delegation, while noting that UNFPA had undertaken an impressive number of communication and information activities, offered the following suggestions: greater attention should be given to monitoring and evaluating the impact of communication activities both at the international and programme level, for example, through (a) periodic surveillance of key audience groups to learn how they used UNFPA publications and what they found most useful; (b) measuring the success of the use of nationally recognized Goodwill Ambassadors; and (c) determining the volume of publications and videos distributed in comparison to previous years and by assessing the impact of those materials on target audiences. The delegation added that it would appreciate an elaboration on the Fund's overall strategic approach to information, education and communication (IEC) activities related to reproductive health, including family planning, and on how the Fund was collaborating with other organizations to share resources and avoid duplication of IEC efforts. Two delegations noted that one way to garner additional donor support would be to communicate clearly to donor countries the results achieved by UNFPA. One avenue for accomplishing that would be through sharing evaluation results.

79. In his response, the Director, IERD, thanked the delegations for their comments, advice and encouragement. He expressed appreciation for the impressive information and communication activities undertaken by Brazil and thanked the delegation of Ireland for its offer to assist the Special Ambassador in Ireland. He stated that UNFPA collaborated with a number of United Nations agencies and NGOs in undertaking various information and communication activities. For example, the Fund was collaborating with UNIFEM in a campaign on the prevention of violence against women and had financed the development of an HIV/AIDS clock, produced with UNAIDS. UNFPA had also collaborated with UNDP and UNICEF on producing various booklets and other publications. In all countries, UNFPA collaborated with NGOs in undertaking a variety of information and advocacy activities. In Europe, the Fund, together with 18 NGOs, had launched its Face-to-Face campaign and had recently worked with selected NGOs on developing public service announcements on the prevention of teenage pregnancy. The Director added that UNFPA also worked with United Nations Associations around the world but had found that they tended to low-key population and reproductive health issues and news and information about the work of the Fund. He observed that in some countries the Fund had also collaborated with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). He noted that influential people and additional staff and financial resources were required to

set up national committees. It took approximately $1 million and a period of two years to set up a national committee. He also stated that he had asked all donor Governments for advocacy support and each had mentioned that they would be able to support only programme activities, not advocacy.

80. With regard to the issue of abortion, he underscored that in keeping with the ICPD Programme of Action, UNFPA focused on making family-planning services available. Approximately 70,000 deaths per year were caused by abortion. Unsafe abortion should be dealt with compassionately and medically. Where abortion was legal, it should be safe and follow-up counselling and family-planning services should be provided. The provision of safe, effective and affordable family planning services would reduce the incidence of abortion. The right to family-planning information and services was a human right.

81. The Director noted that two major events in 1999 would be the ICPD+5 and the Day of Six Billion. He added that all the round tables and meetings being organized in connection with the ICPD+5 review and appraisal were also being used as opportunities to remind the world and the international community about the commitments made at the ICPD in 1994. He stated that the Fund was working with a large number of NGOs and civil society organizations in that regard. The Director observed that UNFPA developed written materials based on the ICPD Programme of Action in user-friendly formats. Those materials were made available to journalists and media personnel with permission for free use and translation. He observed that while several programme countries aired UNFPA public service announcements, only two donor countries, Belgium and the United States, aired such announcements. He added that the main message of those announcements, as well as the messages conveyed by the Special Ambassadors, focused on promoting the goals of the ICPD and not on fund-raising. He stated that the next State of World Population report would focus on the results and progress achieved since the ICPD and constraints and challenges encountered. The Director noted that most UNFPA publications appeared in four languages and some in more languages, for example, the report on the State of World Population was published in 23 languages. All videos were produced in three languages. Efforts were under way to make the UNFPA Web site available in languages other than English. He observed that the Fund was inundated with requests for publications, videos and other materials and its budget for those materials was overstretched.

82. On the subject of evaluations, the Director noted that information was not an exact science. Benchmarks were needed. It would be difficult, for example, to evaluate the impact of a news story that appeared on television. Evaluating the impact of advocacy was complex and had to be carried out over a period of time. In programme countries, the Fund endeavoured to measure impact, for example, through the contraceptive prevalence rate and other health indicators. UNFPA also sought to monitor and measure impact through the audience feedback that it asked for and received from television stations airing UNFPA public announcements. He indicated that UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and the information chiefs of the development assistance agencies of four northern European countries had met for two days in 1997 to discuss evaluation and could not agree on the best approach since most feedback mechanisms cost more than the original information activity. He asked the Executive Board members to share with the Fund their experiences in that area.

83. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) noted that Special Ambassador Keiko Kishi of Japan had been invited to attend a session of the Executive Board but so far her busy schedule had not permitted such a visit. However, the Fund would continue to pursue the matter.

84. The Executive Board took note of the oral report on the UNFPA information and communication strategy.

VII. UNFPA RESOURCE MOBILIZATION STRATEGY

85. As agreed at the pre-session informal consultation held on 12 May, the discussion on the UNFPA resource mobilization strategy focused on three issues in particular: the predictability of resources; the volume of resources; and the timely payment of contributions.

General comments

86. Several delegations made general comments concerning resource mobilization and the funding of UNFPA. One noted that it was not just an issue of resource mobilization but one of improving the financial basis of UNFPA. Another stressed that the discussion was not about funding an organization, but about funding an objective, particularly in view of the ICPD+5 process, which could not be ignored in the discussions of the Executive Board. A third delegation said it sympathized with the need of UNFPA to put its funding on a more stable footing, but noted that programme performance and effectiveness were critical factors in achieving that goal. Several delegations echoed that point, stressing that funding should be linked to effective programme delivery and programme impact as well as to effective monitoring and impact evaluation. One of those delegations stressed that the funding system for UNFPA should be a three-way partnership among UNFPA, programme countries and donor countries that was built on realistic expectations, was output based and transparent, with the ultimate objective of meeting ICPD objectives at the country and global levels. One delegation noted that UNFPA was currently underfunded, given its ability to implement a much larger programme and the need to meet the resource targets of the ICPD Programme of Action. Two delegations noted that consideration of the UNFPA funding strategy should be part of the larger, ongoing discussions of that issue, notably in the context of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on a UNDP Funding Strategy. They therefore said that they could not agree to a funding approach for UNFPA that would not apply to other funds and programmes as well.

87. Numerous delegations noted the importance of political commitment and adherence to the commitments made in Cairo in mobilizing resources for achieving the goals of the ICPD as well as for the UNFPA programme. One delegation, for example, stressed the need for both donors and programme countries to confirm the commitment made at Cairo, which must remain a stimulus for resource mobilization. Another said that resource mobilization went to the heart of the matter: UNFPA had a clear mandate, and the countries of the world had committed themselves to the ICPD Programme of Action. What was needed was political will, predictability of resources and an increase in resources. A third delegation stressed its commitment to multilateralism and called on others to rededicate themselves, at the highest levels, to multilateral development. Two others

emphasized that increasing the volume of resources was not a technical issue, as were the two other issues, but was dependent on the political will of contributors and whether they were committed to fulfilling the goals of the ICPD Programme of Action.

88. Numerous delegations noted the accomplishments of UNFPA despite declining resources and a small staff. They stressed that countries must take up the challenge of increasing the Fund's resources and ensuring their predictability.

Predictability of resources

89. The discussion on the predictability of resources centred on two issues: the feasibility of multi-year pledges; and the possibility of establishing mechanisms to formalize resource commitments, including formal agreements or memoranda of understanding.

90. Numerous delegations expressed support for multi-year pledges. One said that the Executive Board should consider moving to a system of voluntary, multi-year pledges that would allow UNFPA to plan and programme from a reliable funding base. Several others said that they would support such pledges if that were agreeable to most other delegations. Several agreed in principle with multi-year pledges but noted certain technical difficulties that had to be overcome before their countries could adopt such pledges, including the need to change legislation or budgeting procedures. Two delegations cautioned, however, that such pledges should not provide some countries with a pretext for reducing their contributions or for opting out of their part in burden-sharing. Many of those same delegations supported some variation of a three-year rolling contribution. A typical scenario envisaged a firm funding pledge for the first or current year; an indicative contribution for the second year; and a tentative contribution for the third year.

91. Several delegations expressed concerns about multi-year pledges. One, for example, noted that such pledges depended on many factors and thus could not be expected to be addressed in the decision that the Executive Board would adopt in September. Another said that multi-year pledges might be difficult for many countries, particularly those with economies in transition because of the economic reforms under way in those countries. A third pointed out that it could announce its contribution once agreement was reached between the legislative and executive branches of its Government. Another envisioned multi-year pledges and paying in advance but said that such an approach required flexible and pragmatic mechanisms that took into account countries' administrative and budgetary procedures.

92. Several delegations said that multi-year pledges were not possible. That was in part owing to the fact that such pledges were incompatible with their budget systems and cycles, among other things. One of those delegations shared the view that multi-year pledges would lead to more predictability of UNFPA income; it thus encouraged donors who were in a position to do so to follow the recommendation for multi-year pledges although for its part it was unable to do so because of budgetary reasons.

93. Several delegations endorsed the use of formal mechanisms to ensure predictability of contributions. One, for example, noted that there should be a memorandum of understanding between the prospective contributor and UNFPA concerning the amount of contribution and schedule of payments. That would in essence be a formal expression of a moral commitment. Several other delegations endorsed that view. One delegation, on the other hand, recommended a more cautious approach to the use of such memoranda of understanding. Another welcomed the proposal but noted that it required a comprehensive discussion at the informal inter-sessional meeting to be convened before the third regular session 1998.

Volume of resources

94. The discussion on the volume of resources centred on several key issues: the link between funding levels and programme impact and effectiveness; the commitment made at Cairo and the momentum generated by the ICPD+5 process; the need to explore ways to offset or minimize the effects of fluctuations in exchange rates; and efforts to expand the resource base of the Fund to include NGOs, foundations and the private sector.

95. Programme performance and effectiveness appeared to be the most critical factor for most delegations in increasing resources to UNFPA. Indeed, nearly all delegations cited that in one form or another. One delegation said that it wanted to maintain its ability to invest in those groups and organizations that were able to demonstrate the difference their work made and to link any increase in contributions to performance and effectiveness. Another said the Executive Board might want to consider linking yearly budget approvals to outputs achieved. The same delegation and another delegation stressed the importance of the impact and output of programmes, and the role of monitoring and evaluation in measuring that impact and output. Several delegations cited the effectiveness of UNFPA assistance in their respective countries as evidence that the Fund deserved continued and increased support.

96. Several delegations focused on the relative merits of general as compared to multi-bilateral resources. One stressed that the funding system should restate the critical role of core resources but also give UNFPA the ability to take advantage of potential co-financing opportunities and private-sector funding. Another noted that it was important to look at multi-bilateral contributions since it seemed clear from the implementation rates of such resources that there was some difficulty with absorbing multi-bilateral resources. Increasing general contributions, therefore, was clearly the most effective and productive way of enhancing the resource base of UNFPA. Moreover, multi-bilateral resources tended to place an additional burden on both the donor governments and UNFPA. That last point was echoed by another delegation, which cautioned that extensive use of multi-bilateral funding posed risks to good programme management by increasing the administrative burden on executing agencies. The delegation therefore recommended that UNFPA and prospective multi-bilateral donors should consider the possibility of joint multi-bilateral programming and collective multi-bilateral assistance to thematic areas such as adolescent reproductive health. That would greatly reduce the administrative burden and reporting requirements on multi-bilateral projects.

97. The commitments made at Cairo and the momentum generated by the ICPD+5 process were also identified by many delegations as key factors in increasing UNFPA resources. One stressed that the ICPD+5 should provide the impetus for countries to make a formal commitment to a new funding strategy. Another noted, in that regard, that many developing countries had met the commitments made at Cairo whereas not all donors had done so. A third delegation suggested making use of innovative mechanisms and approaches to take advantage of the momentum generated by the ICPD+5. Another expressed concern that the lack of resources could jeopardize the achievement of ICPD goals.

98. Several delegations noted that UNFPA needed a hedge against currency fluctuations. One suggested that the Euro might be beneficial in that regard, as contributions in Euros would not necessarily have to be converted into dollars and thus be exposed to the fluctuations of the exchange market. Another noted that a more rigid payment schedule of contributions would allow the funds and programmes more flexibility in putting in place hedging arrangements to help to offset fluctuations in exchange rates. A third announced that its Government would use a fixed exchange rate favourable to UNFPA in order to minimize the negative influence on its contribution for 1998.

Timely payment

99. All delegations agreed on the need for timely payment of contributions. One suggested that the Executive Board adopt some kind of binding format to ensure that payments were made in the first half of the year. Another delegation noted that the memoranda of understanding it proposed should also include a schedule of payments. A third delegation suggested that each contributor could announce its contribution for the coming year and set a payment schedule, which could be different for each country depending on its needs. The important point was to let UNFPA know in advance the amount of the contribution and when to expect the payment.

Administration's response

100. The Executive Director said that the discussion seemed to be moving in a logical way. Delegations generally agreed on the need for the timely payment of contributions and for some sort of mechanism to formalize the payment schedule. She stressed that the early payment of contributions was crucial to effective programme delivery. She was struck by the many delegations that supported multi-year pledges, even those that noted that such pledges might require changes in legislation and budgeting procedures to do so. She welcomed the proposal regarding memoranda of understanding and said that UNFPA would appreciate some kind of formal agreement that would ensure predictability of income and the timely payment of contributions.

101. The Executive Director said that she was working with countries to try to expand the Fund's resource base. She asked delegations to help to identify industrialists, prominent businesses, foundations and NGOs in their own countries that could contribute to UNFPA. She also appealed to delegations, donor and programme countries alike, to be advocates for UNFPA. She stressed that that was especially important for the private sector, which would be convinced to support UNFPA only if a prominent person were to assume a

leadership role in moving the process forward. She also challenged delegations to explore other avenues of resource mobilization and advocacy, such as public service announcements on national airlines and on local and national television and radio. She agreed that the measurement of outputs was important but pointed out that since UNFPA programmes had multi-year cycles it would not be possible to predict what the resources would achieve each year. She welcomed information from donor countries on methodologies on output-related budgeting and ways to show output in measurable terms.

102. The Executive Board took note of the conference room paper containing an update of the UNFPA financial situation (DP/FPA/1998/CRP.3), and the comments made thereon.

UNDP segment

VIII. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR FOR 1997 AND RELATED MATTERS

103. The Administrator focused the discussion of the 1997 Annual Report on four important cross-cutting issues for UNDP - profile, partnerships, measurement of results and organizational capacity. A brief information paper offering highlights and an update, distributed to delegations the previous week, provided the basis for the discussion that followed.

104. The Administrator emphasized the commitment of UNDP to sharpening its profile while responding to the specific needs of a diverse range of countries. Much progress had already been made as a result of Executive Board decisions 94/14, 95/23 and, more recently, 98/1. Guiding principles were being systematically applied to focus the work of UNDP as determined by national priorities. Experience to date working in the organization's four areas of concentration - poverty eradication, employment and sustainable livelihoods, the advancement of women, and environmental regeneration - had shown that efforts in the area of promoting good governance was critical in achieving results.

105. The Administrator explained that the work of UNDP in the area of governance had evolved as a result of growing demand from programme countries. The critical linkage between governance and poverty eradication had been increasingly acknowledged, as highlighted most recently at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, which was devoted to the world drug problem.

106. Requests for UNDP assistance for governance activities in support of poverty eradication had included: (a) support to approximately 70 elections; (b) help in institution-building, including strengthening the capacities of legislatures; (c) assistance in decentralization efforts, including enhancing the planning and management capacities of locally elected bodies; (d) training for demining activities and efforts to move countries from rehabilitation and reconstruction into long-term sustainable development; and (e) other support to countries in special development circumstances, including in mobilizing financing from the international community.

107. In the area of partnerships, the Administrator underscored that UNDP, like other development organizations, regardless of size, mandate and resources, could not work alone for several reasons - not the least of which being the challenges and targets set by global conferences and the nature of the organization's advocacy and capacity-building work in the multidimensional area of poverty eradication. Referring to specific examples of partnerships outlined in the paper on highlights and updates, the Administrator said that UNDP worked in partnership with a wide spectrum of actors - programme countries, bilateral donors, partner funds and programmes, the specialized agencies of the United Nations, including the Bretton Woods institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the private sector. UNDP cooperation with other parts of the United Nations system, including such far-reaching reforms as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), would be discussed under agenda item 9.

108. Addressing the question of measurement of results, the Administrator acknowledged that obtaining such measurements in UNDP areas of work was complex and that it was particularly difficult to measure the contribution that one organization, such as UNDP, had made within the overall results of a country's development efforts. Nevertheless, he said, the organization was committed to improving the measurements of results and had made some progress in that regard.

109. In terms of organizational capacity, the Administrator outlined some of the progress that had been made in implementing the UNDP 2001 process. He mentioned efforts to strengthen country offices, to increase decentralization and to ensure accountability. He reported, however, that the reform of the organization had not been matched by a growth in funding. He detailed some ways in which the work of UNDP was being hampered by lack of resources and welcomed the efforts of the Open-ended, Ad Hoc Working Group on the UNDP Funding Strategy to assure core resources.

110. Following the Administrator's statement, the President of the Executive Board asked delegations to make short comments on the statement, saying that they would return later to longer statements on the annual report of the Administrator. Several delegations thanked the Administrator for his clear and concise statement and for the useful paper on highlights and an update on the annual report that had been made available to guide the discussion. They also stated that they appreciated the opportunity to have a more interactive dialogue with the Administrator.

111. The Minister of Finance and Development Planning of Botswana made an opening statement in which he spoke of Botswana's progress in its 31 years of independence, helped by UNDP and other assistance. UNDP was considered so highly by his Government that when the organization was unable to fully fund the 1992-1996 country programme, the Government stepped in with a cost-sharing arrangement, feeling that it could benefit from UNDP experience and capacity-building expertise. He recommended such cost-sharing arrangements to programme countries with the means to do so but then made an urgent appeal for donor countries to step up the level of official development assistance (ODA). Cost-sharing and other arrangements could not substitute for the core resources that UNDP needed.

112. The Director General of the Office of Development and Cooperation of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland welcomed the delegates to Switzerland, saying that he was pleased that the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board met periodically in Geneva, where so many United Nations partners were located.

113. In discussing the annual report of the Administrator, many delegations congratulated the Administrator on the documentation, while others encouraged UNDP to include more analysis and information on outcomes. One delegation said that it would like to see thematic annual reports in the future, a view that was seconded by another delegation. One delegation expressed its view that the regional reports contained in the annual report should put the activities of UNDP into the context of activities being undertaken by other development partners. The same delegation said that the regional reports did not seem to refer to the resident coordinator function or to the UNDAF, which would seem to imply that those were not part of the totality of the UNDP programme. Another delegation found that the report on global and interregional activities would have benefited from a greater strategic focus.

Focus

114. Many delegations welcomed the Administrator's remarks on the priority being given to poverty eradication and to the mainstreaming of gender and environmental concerns. Another delegation was pleased that the Administrator had stressed poverty eradication and capacity-building - those were indeed the crucial components of development. One delegation said that the elimination of poverty must be the foremost priority and that it also supported efforts to promote good governance that were consistent with the guiding principles adopted by the Board at its first regular session 1998 (see decision 98/1). In that regard, all of the country cooperation frameworks should show that those principles had been systematically applied.

115. One delegation said that UNDP was right to concentrate its efforts in the area of human rights on eradicating poverty, thereby supporting the right to development. Building national capacity was also very important, but delegations realized that that took time and required partnerships with local actors. Delegations also mentioned that protection of the environment was an important priority and asked that UNDP continue to mainstream global environment concerns into its work. One delegation stated that it felt that UNDP should do more to aid women.

116. Several delegations agreed that much good work had been accomplished in sharpening the focus of UNDP, but some delegations said that more could be done. Other delegations, however, said that they felt that a strong focus for UNDP had been established and that perhaps it no longer required further elaboration at that time. It was time to put the principles agreed on by the Executive Board into action. One delegation said that the proof of the sharpened focus would be in programmes at the field level, and, agreeing with that view, several delegations asked how the focus was being translated into country-specific activities.

117. Some delegations pointed out that it was necessary for UNDP to respond to individual conditions in countries and that therefore it was sometimes difficult

to limit activities to a shortlist of priorities. In that regard, one delegation disagreed with the mention of 20 core development services: UNDP was and must remain country-driven. Therefore, the delegation could not agree to any formulation that interpreted the list of core development services in a restrictive manner. Other countries also stressed that all UNDP-supported programmes must be country-driven.

118. Other delegations felt that the Administrator's mention of 20 core development services was already too broad. One delegation, speaking for another as well, said that the implication that the Executive Board had endorsed such a list of core services in its decision 98/1 was, in their view, a misinterpretation of that decision. Other delegations stated that in their view UNDP must be careful or it would lose the focus it had worked to achieve.

119. Several delegations then stressed the need for balance, saying that although UNDP had to focus on certain areas of intervention it also had to balance competing interests. One delegation said that it was very true that UNDP programmes had to be country-driven, but that if something fell outside of its mandate it could also serve a useful role by helping to find another organization to address the issue. Another delegation summed up these views by saying that the challenge for the organization was to remain focused while responding to varied needs.

120. In addressing UNDP priorities, several delegations said that those priorities implied a strong focus on the least developed countries (LDCs), especially those in Africa. One delegation informed the Executive Board that Africa would be the only continent entering the twenty-first century with more people living in poverty than in the previous century. Another delegation said that the 20/20 Initiative was of great importance to its Government. The Administrator had said he was downplaying the UNDP role in the Initiative, implying that there might be fewer resources devoted to activities that concentrated on supplying basic social services. In the view of the delegation, however, that did not mean that UNDP could not continue to be an effective advocate for the 20/20 Initiative.

121. Increasing efforts being devoted to governance questions received the endorsement of several delegations. Programme countries reported that UNDP was helping them to implement decentralization measures as well as to carry out administrative and civil service reforms. One delegation said that good governance must be honest, transparent, responsive and efficient, decentralized and fully participatory and, most importantly, fully accountable; it trusted that UNDP was promoting such ideals in its programmes. One delegation called attention to the recent conference on governance that had taken place in Accra, Ghana, with the participation of 25 African countries, and wondered how the results of that conference would be communicated elsewhere. Another delegation noted that demand for assistance in the area of governance was increasing and congratulated UNDP for developing innovative responses to those requests.

122. Several delegations said that it was necessary for UNDP to be more visible, with a clear and strong profile. Among other things, that would be important in forging partnerships with other agencies. Financial sustainability depended increasingly on making results known to political decision makers and their

constituencies, and the organization as a whole needed to be more results-oriented. Doing a better job of making its positive results better known would help gain parliamentary and public support. In that regard, one delegation said that the statement of the Minister from Botswana was a good example of how programme countries could help in publicizing results that had been achieved in their own countries. Several delegations stressed the vital role that communication played in making Governments and people aware of what UNDP was doing. That included telling those audiences who the beneficiaries of the actions of UNDP were and how they had benefited from the organization's interventions. Another delegation pointed out that building confidence in UNDP and its work should not be limited to donor countries but had to involve programme countries as well, if a true partnership with those countries was to be developed.

Partnerships

123. One delegation said that there should be more strategic thinking about the nature of partnerships, e.g., what safeguards would be put in place to ensure the roles of complementary agencies. The delegation feared that otherwise a system of conditionalities might develop. Another delegation said that in seeking partnerships with other organizations, such as the Bretton Woods institutions, UNDP needed to preserve the specificity of its own contributions. Another delegation said that in any partnership, UNDP needed to play the preeminent role.

124. A request was made for more information on cooperative efforts that were being carried out with the European Union. Also, more information was requested on the possibility of partnerships with the private sector, including in terms of resource mobilization. In discussing partnerships, one delegation said that more effective partnerships could be pursued with bilateral aid agencies and reported on several undertakings in which his own country's development assistance agency had cooperated fruitfully with UNDP. One delegation requested more information on how other organizations, including the Bretton Woods institutions, were collaborating through the country-level theme groups. One delegation pointed out that in spite of the increased attention that was being given to cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions, none of those institutions had sent a representative to the current session of the Executive Board.

125. One delegation mentioned the growing relationship between trade and development and reminded the Executive Board that the 48 least developed countries had a total population of more than 500 million people but were responsible for less than 1 per cent of world trade; the delegation called for expanding partnerships with trade-related organizations. One delegation said that the High-Level Meeting on Integrated Initiatives for Least Developed Countries' Trade Development had to take into account the broader context of development. Another asked what concrete measures UNDP had taken to carry out the decisions of the High-Level Meeting.

126. With respect to paragraph 17 of document DP/1998/17, one delegation stated that the targets elaborated in the "Strategy for the 21st Century" by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic

Cooperation and Development had to be approved in an intergovernmental forum before their implementation was defined as part of the responsibilities of the resident coordinators. Another delegation said that DAC should help to elaborate overall, coordinated efforts among its members, including bilateral donors as well.

127. One delegation asked why it seemed to be taking a long time to harmonize programme cycles among the various United Nations funds and programmes.

Measurement of results

128. One delegation said that while UNDP could make good use of programme indicators as a way to inform constituencies of what had been accomplished, their major use should be in the designing of programmes. In that regard, bilateral aid organizations should be prepared to learn and share with UNDP in the development and use of such indicators. A number of delegations agreed with the Administrator that it was difficult to develop reliable indicators, but endorsed the organization's efforts to improve the measurement of results. One delegation said that it expected UNDP to present performance indicators to the Executive Board on the objectives specified in its decision 98/1 on narrowing the focus of UNDP interventions. Delegations said that although it was difficult to obtain such information, numbers were needed to judge the effectiveness of the organization's work.

Organizational capacity

129. In addressing the question of the ongoing reform process, one delegation said that while it was crucial to carry out reforms within UNDP, reforms were also necessary at the United Nations system level if human development efforts were to be successful. Another delegation stated that the organization was currently in a state of transition while broader United Nations reforms were being pursued and said that UNDP should play a prominent role in that process as well as undertake its own internal reforms.

130. One delegation said that it considered the UNDAF to be the centrepiece of United Nations reform efforts because it provided a common agenda for different entities and allowed them to have integrated approaches to development initiatives. One delegation said that the UNDAF had to be based on the national strategy, plans and priorities of the programme country involved. It expected a comprehensive evaluation report on the results of the first UNDAFs in the near future. Another delegation said that the UNDAF had to replace existing mechanisms and not just be an addition to the structure that was already there.

131. One delegation mentioned that the Administrator's comments on Guatemala, which was one of the first countries to have an UNDAF, reflected well on the UNDP country team as well as on the commitment of the Government. The objectives of the UNDAF in that country were consistent with those advocated by the United Nations and reflected the results of the global conferences. One delegation said that it was anxious to see the results of the first UNDAFs in Mali and Viet Nam.

132. In discussing internal reform, one delegation said that UNDP needed to strengthen management at all levels. Given the increasing decentralization of the programme, there was a continuing need to strengthen accountability and evaluation functions, put more emphasis on lessons learned and invest more in national execution. In that regard, one delegation said that it agreed with the Administrator that the country office network was the greatest asset of UNDP and that strengthening the country offices in priority programme countries was important. However, the delegation urged that UNDP consider whether maintaining the broadest possible network of UNDP country offices was the best way to achieve impact in an environment of declining resources. One delegation requested more information on the process of decentralization of personnel, saying that such decentralization could make for a leaner, more flexible and more prompt organization. Another delegation asked for greater redeployment of headquarters staff to country offices. It also asked whether the administrative structure of UNDP, particularly those units dealing with audit and legal affairs - was strong enough to accommodate increased decentralization.

133. Several delegations said that the UNDP 2001 change process would strengthen UNDP; some said that it could lead to reduced costs. One delegation wanted to know what was being done to foster a sense of ownership of the change management process among the staff. One delegation congratulated the organization on its efforts to employ more women in professional positions, while another said that the goal should not be to achieve a certain arbitrary numerical ratio if that meant sacrificing efficiency in the attempt.

134. Several programme countries complimented the organization on the quality of the resident coordinators who had served in their countries and said that their role was vital in ensuring the success of programmes. Many delegations said they favoured keeping the functions of the resident representative and the resident coordinator together and also believed that UNDP should retain its role as the manager and funder of the resident coordinator system. Several delegations said that they felt that resident coordinators had given valuable impetus to United Nations reform efforts at the field level.

135. One delegation said that it supported efforts to strengthen the resident coordinator function and felt that one necessary ingredient was to foster a greater sense of ownership of that function among the other United Nations agencies. Several delegations spoke of their support for General Assembly resolution 50/120, which emphasized the need to support the resident coordinator function. One delegation said that it supported efforts to strengthen the role of the resident coordinator but emphasized that that had to be done within the context of General Assembly resolution 50/120.

136. One delegation said that a cost-sharing arrangement for funding the resident coordinator function should be worked out with other United Nations agencies; given the current financial constraints, UNDP should not have to shoulder all the financial burden itself.

137. A number of delegations asked what efforts had been made to widen the pool of resident coordinators and what were the criteria for choosing resident coordinators from outside UNDP. One delegation said that the selection process should be designed to find the best-qualified individual, whether inside or

outside of UNDP. Another delegation said that the main criteria for selection should be the person's ability to coordinate, not the possession of any particular technical know-how.

Resource mobilization

138. One delegation said that countries needed to remember that UNDP programmes were not abstract exercises but were practical activities that affected the lives of millions of people throughout the world. Another delegation said that the greatest challenge for UNDP was to mobilize more resources. Several delegations said they supported any measures the Administrator could take to halt the decline in resources and to encourage an increase.

139. In addressing funding, one delegation said that the secretariat should concentrate on countries that were underperforming, but that other sources needed to be looked at as well - multi-bilateral funds, trust funds, partnerships with other international agencies (especially Bretton Woods institutions), foundations and the private sector. The secretariat should be commended for its efforts so far, but more needed to be done. One delegation said that it was true that the best way to attract more resources was to have good programmes and good management but that the organization should be realistic about how much funding would be forthcoming in the current political and economic environment. It also said, along with many other delegations, that UNDP needed to be better at communicating its achievements as a way of attracting more resources.

140. One delegation, seconded by another, pointed out that in its decision 95/23 the Executive Board had set a target of $1.1 billion per year for UNDP programmes to help meet the needs of developing countries; as far as the two delegations were concerned that amount was not negotiable. The delegation asked why the donor countries were reducing the level of ODA while development needs were increasing. It commended the efforts of the Government of Norway, which contributed 1 per cent of its gross national product per year to ODA, and asked that other countries do as well.

141. Many delegations regretted the decline in contributions to UNDP. Several programme countries spoke of the assistance they had received from UNDP in reducing poverty, aiding democratization, working to improve the status of women, etc., and asked that the resources needed to carry out that work continue to be forthcoming. Those delegations spoke of their nations' needs for development assistance and regretted the lack of UNDP resources to do more. Several delegations mentioned their concern that the efforts UNDP had made to reform itself had not been matched by increased contributions to the organization. One delegation pointed out that it was not just a question of the volume of resources, but also of the predictability of those resources and hoped that the Open-ended, Ad Hoc Working Group on the UNDP Funding Strategy would look at solutions to that question in its deliberations. Another delegation asked donor countries, if they could not increase the volume of their financial contributions, to consider providing additional in-kind donations.

142. One delegation said that the level of UNDP resources had never met the level of its expectations and said that increasing the resources of UNDP depended on the political will of the donor countries.

Regional questions

143. A number of delegations from eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States spoke about the assistance they had received from UNDP during their transitional periods to market economies. Many of those countries spoke about the vital role UNDP had played, especially in the area of governance and institution-building. One delegation stressed that UNDP had relied on national execution modalities, which no other donor in the country was currently doing. The same delegation also complimented UNDP on its clear monitoring and evaluation system. Another delegation thanked UNDP for its work in helping to integrate national minorities and its support for human rights efforts; such efforts were also mentioned by other delegations from the region as well.

144. Several countries presented examples of initiatives that UNDP had undertaken in the region, with many of them emphasizing the importance of governance projects. In countries in which civil strife had taken place, delegations noted with appreciation the role that UNDP had played in reconstruction. Delegations cited examples of UNDP assistance in strengthening civil society organizations, which were often quite weak, and of developing resource centres that were of great value to many parts of society, including Governments. One delegation cited UNDP work in strengthening government institutions within the new democratic frameworks and in helping to elaborate national development strategies.

145. Many of the countries also expressed the desire that it would be possible for UNDP to continue assistance in spite of the environment of declining resources, some of them noting that efforts in their countries had already been scaled back. They said that the gains made could be jeopardized if assistance ended too soon. They all asked that UNDP support not be cut off too early in the transition process because of lack of resources. Some spoke of their hopes of becoming donors to UNDP in the future, reporting that the organization was helping them to develop a strategy to do so.

146. One delegation asked what was meant in paragraph 19 of document DP/1998/17/Add.5 by "refocus[ing]" the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa. Since the Special Initiative had just started, it seemed too early to refocus it. Did it imply that there was a lack of resources? Another delegation said that it was discouraged by the results achieved thus far and asked what real benefits had been forthcoming. Another delegation said that the objectives of the Special Initiative were of great importance to its country, but the results, if any, were not well known. To date, there seemed to be little if any added value from the Special Initiative, and it suffered from a perceived lack of resources. One delegation asked about the involvement of the World Bank in the Special Initiative.

147. One delegation said that efforts in Africa were indeed important but asked that the Asia and the Pacific region not be forgotten. One delegation said that in the section of the annual report of the Administrator dealing with Asia and

the Pacific (DP/1998/17/Add.1 (Part III) and Corr.1), it would have appreciated more information on the UNDP response to the financial crisis in Asia as well as on the North-east Asian Subregional Programme. Another delegation said that UNDP could play a valuable coordinating role in the Asian financial crisis and asked that UNDP assume a greater presence in helping to address the crisis.

Countries in special situations

148. One programme country in Africa drew the attention of the Executive Board to the rapid increase of refugees in its country, caused by conflict situations in neighbouring States, and asked what UNDP could do to help. Another programme country in Europe discussed the plight of refugees in its country and asked what UNDP could do to help in such special circumstances. Another programme country in Africa pointed out that developing countries were often hit by natural disasters that they did not have the financial resources to address - in its case the country was faced with an invasion of crickets. Another delegation pointed out the difficulties faced by small island developing countries, which were often subject to volatile economic situations caused by commodity price fluctuations and natural disasters. It asked that those needs not be forgotten.

Specific questions

149. Many delegations said that they appreciated UNDP efforts in demining and requested more information on the organization's role in mine action and mine-clearing.

150. One delegation asked several specific questions: why did the target for delivery for United Nations Capital Development Fund fall by 9 per cent? What lessons had been learned so far by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)? Another delegation asked about the financial outlook for UNIFEM.

151. Several delegations said that they supported UNDP efforts in the area of technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) but said that great potential remained untapped. One delegation said that it was looking for greater strategic vision from the UNDP Special Unit for Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries.

152. One delegation asked what the comparative advantage of UNDP was in the area of AIDS. One country pointed out that while it supported UNDP assistance in helping countries to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, such activities could not be placed in the context of follow-up to the Kyoto Protocol, which did impose any legally binding commitments on developing countries.

153. Several delegations spoke in favour of the programme of assistance to the Palestinian people, as outlined in document DP/1998/17/Add.4, saying that it responded to the needs of the Palestinian people.

154. Several delegations took exception to the statement in paragraph 3 of document DP/1998/17/Add.1 (Part V) that corruption continued to be prevalent in Latin America and the Caribbean, saying that that was an over-generalization and did not take into account the efforts the countries of the region were making to combat the problem.

155. Two delegations asked why the staffing of the subregional resource facilities was proceeding so slowly and wondered whether the concept needed to be revisited.

Responses of the Administration

156. The Administrator thanked the Minister from Botswana for his statement and expressed his support for the views expressed. The Administrator said that he was especially grateful for various statements made by different programme countries during the discussion, which often conveyed a vivid picture of what UNDP and the resident coordinators were doing.

157. In discussing the annual report, the Administrator said that there would be a better database for use in preparing the report in the future. When reading the introduction to the annual report he hoped delegations were made aware of how far the organization had come in doing things on an organizational basis and how much work had been accomplished in terms of building cohesion and a cross-bureau philosophy. He felt that the annual report showed that UNDP was stronger than ever before.

158. The Director of the Bureau for Development Policy said that UNDP would work to make the section of the annual report that contained information on the global programme (DP/1998/17/Add.2) less fragmented and more analytical. The global programme was going through a transitional phase at present, trying to achieve greater coherence and focus.

159. On the question of focus, the Administrator said that the organization had become very focused in developing 20 specific development services. It was, in his view, a very focused agenda. The Administrator noted that a number of delegations stressed the organization's "profile" and the need to raise that profile in a number of countries where it was not so visible at present, including the need to reduce the UNDP message or messages to simple terms that were clearly understandable. In that regard, he called attention to the new posters that were displayed in the conference room. Also, he said that in terms of projecting a consistent image, the organization had to practice what it preached. The organization's focus, not just its message, had to be clear and crisp. Therefore, he had, for example, tried to steer UNDP away from helping to implement the basic social services for all objectives. These were all very important, but other agencies and organizations were working in those areas: UNDP needed to focus on its primary goal of poverty eradication. The Administrator agreed with the delegation that had said that human rights had to be seen across the whole spectrum of freedoms, and that included the freedom from poverty as a fundamental human freedom. He foresaw UNDP maintaining a major role in the 20/20 Initiative, recognizing, as one delegation had said, that an advocacy, coordinating and facilitating role could be very helpful, even when UNDP did not have a major funding role.

160. The challenge before UNDP, the Administrator said, was to communicate its focus effectively, including to policy makers. He also agreed with comments that focus had to be translated more effectively at the country level. As for communication strategy, the Administrator said that the progress the organization was making in that area would be apparent when the UNDP information

and communication strategy was discussed under agenda item 14; it was an issue of great importance to the organization.

161. In discussing governance, the Administrator said that initiatives in that area would become an ever greater part of UNDP programmes because so many countries were asking for assistance in that area. UNDP was so decentralized and so demand-driven that the growth in the number of requests was inevitably leading to more UNDP actions in that area. UNDP was increasingly viewed as a trusted partner for governance activities.

162. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Development Policy said she was encouraged by the positive comments made about UNDP activities in the area of governance. A new initiative that was being launched was a global programme that covered three themes: (a) governing institutions, including best practices for elections, legislatures and judiciaries; (b) decentralization and local governance; and (c) public sector management and transparency. UNDP continued to take a demand-driven approach: all of those initiatives came at the request of Governments.

163. In response to one delegation's question on the issue of the indebtedness of developing countries, the Associate Administrator explained that the role of UNDP was to serve as an advocate for greater debt reduction and for a greater focus on social and environmental concerns and to help to build national capacity for debt management. The Associate Administrator said that the organization was conscious of the need to do more for women, as one delegation had called for. He reported that 25 per cent of resources went to gender-related programmes. He stated that poverty was a particular problem for women, especially in the least developed countries and in countries in special circumstances. He mentioned the acute situation in Afghanistan, where women could not go out to get the work they needed to support their families.

164. The Administrator thanked those delegations that had said that UNDP needed to take more of a leadership role among the United Nations development agencies; he agreed that the organization had to work for the system as a whole. With regard to resident coordinators, he said that only a small portion of UNDP programme resources actually went towards the coordination function. He said that he thought it would be a very bad idea to separate funding from the management of the resident coordinator system: funding should continue to be provided by UNDP. In any case, it did not represent a large proportion of resources. In terms of time, a survey had shown that, on average, 30 per cent of a resident representative's time was spent on resident coordinator functions. The criteria for selecting resident coordinators outside of UNDP were the same as those for selecting them from inside the organization.

165. The Administrator said that harmonizing programme cycles was a good thing; perhaps the way to achieve it was for the governing bodies of each of the funds and programmes to legislate it. In any case, he hoped that the UNDAF would lead to harmonized programme cycles through its efforts at overall harmonization. He also said that it was true that targets adopted by DAC were not the equivalent of legislation, but UNDP needed to be aware of those targets to help mobilize efforts at the country level.

166. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Planning and Resource Management said that UNDP had important, long-standing relationships with the Bretton Woods institutions, especially the World Bank. In the past, the World Bank had been an executing agency for some UNDP projects, but its role in that area was diminishing. In its role of helping to facilitate aid coordination, UNDP supported the Consultative Group process, led by the World Bank, while the Bank supported the round-table mechanism, led by UNDP. Given changes within the World Bank, including its greater focus on combating poverty, recognition of capacity-building as a priority, a stronger country office network and growth in the provision of grant technical assistance, it was perhaps time to redefine the relationship between UNDP and the World Bank. In fact, dialogue on the relationship was taking place at the top level of the two organizations, and senior management was looking at areas for future collaboration.

167. The Administrator said that as part of its work plan the United Nations Development Group was going to coordinate the UNDAFs in two pilot countries with the World Bank's country assistance strategies. He said that while the relationship with the World Bank was not totally free of difficulties, in general terms it was very positive. For example, the World Bank participated in almost all the theme groups organized by the United Nations system in programme countries.

168. In response to the question about cooperation between UNDP and the European Union, the Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa reported that UNDP had taken the initiative in setting up a working relationship with the European Commission that would strive to enhance development efforts by building synergies between the two organizations. A joint steering committee had been established, which included the World Bank as well, and it would be meeting very shortly.

169. In response to questions concerning UNDP cooperation with the private sector, the Administrator said that the organization was in the process of producing a compilation of UNDP initiatives with the private sector and was trying to engage the international private sector in the organization's work. That included discussing the possibility of getting 20 to 30 major multinational corporations to set up a major investment fund under certain criteria still to be defined. There was a segment of private sector companies that was interested in development and would be willing to make funds available.

170. On the question of results, the Administrator said that, as stated in the paper giving highlights and an update on the annual report of the Administrator, "measuring the results of development activities is generally acknowledged to be complex but it is particularly complex in the areas in which UNDP works - advocacy, facilitation/aid coordination and capacity-building" (para. 24). For example, it was impossible to quantify the impact of national human development reports although there was a general consensus that they had made significant contributions in the 100 programme countries in which UNDP had helped produce them. Measuring the success of governance initiatives was notoriously difficult. That said, the Administrator reiterated that the organization was committed to developing performance indicators and that the evaluation of the

impact of UNDP programmes was crucial to the success of the organization. He had conveyed that to the Evaluation Office.

171. In response to questions about making the UNDAF more effective, the Administrator urged the Executive Board to continue to push all of the United Nations development agencies in that direction. It was indeed the centrepiece of United Nations reform, and it meant moving the different parts of the United Nations system from coordination via information-sharing to really working together. He agreed with delegations that had said it was necessary to examine which programming instruments could be fused with the UNDAF and not just add another layer to what was already being done. He reported that other donors were also starting to work together through the United Nations theme groups, in which the bilateral donor community could also participate. He acknowledged that UNDP was working in very diverse circumstances throughout the world, and he felt that that diversity was reflected in the country cooperation frameworks that were presented to the Executive Board for its approval.

172. The Director of the Bureau for Planning and Resource Management said that decentralization was a top priority and challenge for UNDP. The organization had made great strides in decentralizing its operations and further decentralization was under way, including budget decentralization. That had meant re-engineering much of the organization's structure, including the information systems, and greater use of such mechanisms as outsourcing. More of that would be reflected in the next biennial budget. Decentralization had required the organization to make investments in personnel management: new systems had to be set up and staff had to be trained. Performance indicators would be established by January 1999. The philosophy had been to put people where the work was, and during the 1990s that had meant a 25 per cent reduction in headquarters staff and a 10 per cent increase in field staff. A year previously, the 2001 package had been put in place, which meant putting a cap on non-core posts, re-engineering some positions and outsourcing. It was still being discussed whether the regional bureaux should be located in headquarters or in the regions. There was an ongoing discussion of funding strategies and of further reductions at headquarters. He thanked the delegation for pointing out that the 60:40 ratio of men to women in professional positions should not be achieved by sacrificing efficiency.

173. On the question of accountability in a decentralized environment, the Director of the Bureau for Planning and Resource Management said that by 2001 it was planned to have a strengthened system of accountability in place. The audit function was much improved and increased resources were being devoted to it. Outsourcing to international audit firms had saved some money. The Legal Section of the Office of Human Resources, however, was struggling with a significantly increased caseload - up from 20 cases a year in the recent past to 150 cases a year at present.

174. On comments made about resource mobilization, the Administrator said that it was true that some large economies did not contribute as much as other, smaller, countries. UNDP would continue to encourage those nations to contribute more. The Administrator agreed wholeheartedly with the comments of the delegation that said that predictability of resources was as important as volume.

175. Concerning the Special Initiative on Africa, the Administrator said that ODA for Africa was declining even faster than ODA as a whole. But there had been some notable accomplishments, especially in terms of partnership with the World Bank. The Special Initiative did not mean the implementation of everything that needed to be done but doing certain specific things better than in the past. The idea was to address certain overriding issues such as governance, gender and population and to validate the successes that had been achieved in some countries.

176. The Coordinator of the United Nations Special Initiative on Africa addressed issues raised by several delegations about the Special Initiative, underscoring the fact that it was a 10-year initiative that was only in its second year. He said that the technical working groups had started their work and that they would be devising indicators to measure progress. He felt that the programmes that were being developed were good; however, the financial commitments were not entirely satisfactory: the Special Initiative required additional resources. The big question was how to mobilize the necessary resources.

177. The Coordinator also discussed the African Governance Forum series. Two such forums had taken place, the latest in Accra, Ghana, on accountability and transparency, and a third forum focusing on conflict management and governance was planned. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs was developing an inventory on governance that included who was doing what and where resources were needed. In response to the comment on the number of forums in relation to the results, he said that he felt the African Governance Forum series would in fact make a major contribution. In his view, the most important contributions would result from each participating country's preparations for and follow-up on the forums.

178. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa said that dwindling resources for Africa were having an impact on what UNDP could do in the continent, forcing contractions in terms of the depth and scope of activities. Staff resources were extremely stretched. The Bureau needed a strong policy unit and a unit to help countries in special circumstances. In response to the situation in Guinea, she said that UNDP was setting up a special event on preventative development for Guinea to help the country deal with refugee problems before they led to a crisis. In answering questions about the role of UNDP in combating AIDS efforts, the Regional Director mentioned the situation of Uganda, where UNDP had helped the Government set up a special AIDS commission in 1992 and had helped the country devise a national strategy for preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS.

179. The Associate Administrator said that UNDP resources were inadequate to meet many of the needs of countries in special situations. But he said that UNDP assistance could often be used to leverage other funding. In the occupied Palestinian territory, for example, UNDP assistance of $4 million led to funding of $35 million from other donors. In such situations, UNDP often came up with proposals that could be of interest to other donors. The Associate Administrator said that in Guinea, which was suffering from an influx of refugees, UNDP had set up contingency plans for the north and the south of the country and had contacts with various interested parties, including the Office

of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and could furnish some limited funding.

180. The Associate Administrator answered questions concerning mine actions by saying that the focal point for mine actions within the United Nations system was the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, which had set up a number of working groups, which, in turn, had led to greater complementarity and a broad division of labour. The focus of UNDP was on capacity-building for sustainable mine action, so that necessary actions could be carried over after emergency situations had ended. UNDP had supplied part of the funding but most of it had come from donors. UNDP had carried out programmes in Cambodia and Mozambique, and later in 1998 it would be taking over programmes in Afghanistan and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

181. The Administrator said that UNDP was making a significant effort in the area of global climate change, especially in terms of capacity-building, but that the organization was fully aware that there was nothing in the Kyoto Protocol that set legally binding emission goals on the developing countries.

182. The Associate Administrator reported that funding for UNIFEM rose from $17.1 million in 1996 to $17.5 million in 1997.

183. On the question asked by delegations as to why there had been delays in recruitment for the subregional resource facilities, the Director of the Bureau for Development Policy said that it had taken longer to find individuals with the skills needed than had been envisaged. The facilities should be operational within a couple of months.

184. The Executive Board took note of the report of the Administrator for 1997, including the introduction to the report, the main programme record; the reports on global and interregional programmes and other major programmes, other funds and programmes, the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People, and the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa; and the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit and statistical annex (DP/1998/17/Add.1-7 and DP/1998/17/Add.1 (Part III)/Corr.1), with the comments made thereon. The Executive Board also took note of the report on follow-up to decision 97/15 on change management, including the interim report on the subregional resource facilities (DP/1998/CRP.8), and took note of the UNDP strategic plan 1998 (DP/1998/CRP.9).

IX. FOLLOW-UP TO UNITED NATIONS REFORM

185. The Administrator briefed delegations on recent developments in the ongoing reform of the United Nations system. He said that the reform was designed to make the United Nations more responsive to changes in the world and to strengthen the coherence, hence the impact, of United Nations organizations and departments, especially at the country level. He reported that the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) mechanism, which was the most revolutionary of the Secretary-General's reforms, was being pilot-tested in 18 countries. The UNDAF pilot tests would be evaluated in the coming months.

186. Concerning the resident coordinator system, the Administrator noted the view of many delegations expressed under agenda item 8 that the resident coordinator system should be funded and managed by UNDP on behalf of the United Nations system. He detailed a number of important changes in the system designed to make it more responsive and to instil a sense of ownership among all the participating agencies and organizations. On the establishment of common premises for United Nations agencies, he informed the Executive Board that he had proposed to the Secretary-General a list of 16 countries where United Nations Houses could be set up, and by 2002 it would be possible to analyse the potential in all programme countries for establishing common premises. He pointed out that moves to common premises would not always mean cost savings. He also noted several recent collaborative efforts with other development partners and then concluded his remarks by saying that the reform of the United Nations was a process, not an event.

187. One delegation asked how the experience of the first 18 countries with UNDAFs would be passed on to other countries. Another delegation asked when the Executive Board would receive the evaluation that was about to be carried out and wanted to know more about the timetable for implementing UNDAFs in countries outside those in which it was being pilot-tested. Another delegation pointed out that an UNDAF had to be approved by the programme country involved in order to be effective, while another said that it had to be tailored to each country's individual needs.

188. One delegation noted that resident coordinators would be chosen from a wider pool of candidates and then commented on the Administrator's statement that a faster method of choosing resident coordinators had been developed; it wondered whether such an important selection process should be rushed.

189. The Administrator replied that the evaluation of the UNDAFs that UNDP was carrying out was not the only one. He expected that from the evaluations that were being done there would be a review of the framework in several Executive Boards as well as at the country level. The UNDAF had been discussed in the Economic and Social Council for the last two years, and he expected that to continue. Those evaluations and discussions would be examining a wide range of programming tools at the country level. One of the things that was being looked at was the possibility of developing a collaborative advisory note that might eliminate the need for a separate UNDP advisory note to the Government. The evaluations would show how UNDAFs could help to enhance collaboration at the country level; of course, much collaboration already existed. Once the evaluations of the pilot UNDAFs were completed, there would still be many considerations before using the UNDAF globally. He agreed that the engagement of the programme countries in the UNDAF process had to be addressed. He said that one way of looking at it would be to think of the country strategy note as the "demand side", i.e., the formulation of a country's needs according to its priorities, while the UNDAF represented the "supply side", i.e., the response of the United Nations country team as to how it could address those needs.

190. In addressing comments made about the resident coordinator system, the Administrator said that any streamlining of the selection process would not weaken it. In simplifying the process, it was hoped to make it more transparent and more rigorous. He provided additional details about the pace of

establishing common premises, saying that the process had already identified more than 50 countries that seemed to be potential sites for common premises.

191. The Executive Board took note of the oral report on the UNDP role in the follow-up to United Nations reform.

Emergency Relief Coordinator

192. The Associate Administrator introduced document DP/1998/18 on the transfer of responsibility for operational activities for natural disaster mitigation, prevention and preparedness from the Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to UNDP. The Disaster Management Training Programme was transferred to UNDP effective 1 March 1998, and the functions of the Disaster Mitigation Branch were assumed by UNDP on 1 April 1998. Since then, the new UNDP Disaster Management Programme (DMP), which would be located in Geneva, had been preoccupied with start-up activities.

193. The Associate Administrator said that DMP would undertake the protection of development gains by helping to build national capacity for disaster mitigation, prevention and preparedness, while OCHA would continue to be responsible for disaster response. There was, therefore, a much clearer demarcation of roles and responsibilities within the United Nations system, but one that required a close strategic alliance between UNDP and OCHA. He said that a new opportunity had been created within the United Nations system to collaborate more closely in addressing disaster reduction in a systemic and mutually reinforcing manner.

194. DMP had been established with an initial staff of seven Professionals and four General Service, with 10 United Nations Volunteer programme officers for ongoing country programmes. DMP already faced a backlog of requests for country programmes, largely as a result of the El Niño phenomenon. DMP would be subject to regular monitoring and evaluation, with an initial review in 1999 and a full evaluation in 2000.

195. In assuming the functions of DMP, it was the position of UNDP that it had been given a mandate to address disaster reduction on behalf of the United Nations system. Therefore, it was the assumption of UNDP that the United Nations would continue to provide biennial grants for administrative support at least equal to its initial grant. UNDP was not and would not be in a position to allocate core resources for administrative support for DMP. In addition, UNDP felt that the establishment of a multi-donor trust fund would be the appropriate mechanism for the financing of DMP programmes.

196. A statement was made on behalf of the Emergency Relief Coordinator of OCHA. He said that his office remained responsible for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and for coordinating response to natural, environmental and industrial disasters. It was therefore necessary for UNDP and OCHA to continue to cooperate closely in light of the synergy between disaster mitigation and response, especially recognizing that the best time for building capacity for mitigation was immediately following a disaster, when many valuable lessons could be assimilated. OCHA looked forward to intensifying its cooperation with UNDP.

197. One delegation, speaking for another as well, said that the introductory statements had raised a crucial question: how was the new arrangement to be financed? What resources had been transferred to date? The two delegations shared the view of UNDP that administrative support for DMP should not come from UNDP core resources. The delegations asked for further details on the practical arrangements for ensuring coordination between UNDP and OCHA.

198. One delegation said that the United Nations organizational structure for disaster response and mitigation had been and continued to be complex. The delegation was not convinced that the new structure would be able to solve all the problems. It felt that the newly appointed Emergency Relief Coordinator had a key role to play and should receive all possible cooperation. The financing of the new arrangement required a permanent solution and, to the extent possible, the delegation favoured funding from UNDP core resources. It felt that the financial arrangement would be the subject of considerable discussion at the upcoming meeting of the Economic and Social Council.

199. Another delegation said that it supported the new arrangement and felt that UNDP would be playing a role that was natural to it. The delegation said that, in its view, the initial grant for administrative support from the United Nations had clearly been made on a one-time basis, and the delegation did not expect that to continue on a regular basis. The delegation opposed any mixing of assessed contributions to the United Nations with voluntary contributions to funds and programmes such as UNDP. The delegation, along with others, said that it looked forward to the report of the Secretary-General as called for in General Assembly resolution 51/185.

200. A number of delegations said that they favoured financing the new arrangement out of the regular budget of the United Nations. One delegation elaborated by saying that if administrative support for DMP came from UNDP core resources, that would reduce the amount of resources for the organization's other programmes; the delegation was opposed to that.

201. Several delegations from programme countries said that the question of disaster mitigation in achieving sustainable development was a crucial one and gave examples of actual or potential natural disasters disruptive to their national economies. They therefore firmly believed that the new programme was performing an invaluable service in building national capacity and in training personnel in order to help countries cope with natural and other disasters. One delegation noted that the new programme would be demand-driven and stressed its support for that concept.

202. Several other delegations spoke in favour of the new arrangements but reiterated that close cooperation with OCHA and the Emergency Relief Coordinator as well as other bodies would be crucial to its success. They asked for further elaboration on the coordination mechanisms that were either in place or were planned. One delegation asked what was being done about disseminating the knowledge that was gained about disaster relief and mitigation, and whether the knowledge gained was also disseminated to scientific societies. One delegation hoped that the new DMP would become operational as soon as possible. Another delegation asked for additional information on staffing plans.

203. In responding to questions from delegations, the Associate Administrator said that UNDP had requested $2.3 million from the United Nations for administrative support for the following two years, prorated from 1 April 1998; $1.3 million of programme trust funds had not yet been received. In response to questions about future financial arrangements, he said that the information he had supplied to the Executive Board was based on General Assembly resolution 52/12 B. As for co-mingling of voluntary and assessed contributions, he said that such situations already existed and cited examples. He reiterated that UNDP did not expect to finance DMP from core resources.

204. In response to questions about the coordination of disaster mitigation activities, the Associate Administrator said that at the global level a new coordinating body would be established the following month. At the country level, coordination was being carried out by disaster management teams that were already in place. UNDP would be in close contact with the Emergency Relief Coordinator as well as OCHA and other bodies such as the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and, for technical matters, with the Scientific and Technical Committee of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, which served as an overall umbrella group for discussion and dissemination of scientific and technical information.

205. Concerning the staffing of DMP, he said that the current proposed level of staffing was based on, but less than, the level of staffing that had been in place under the previous arrangements and the amount of financing available. The posts were being advertised internationally and obviously required finding personnel with experience in the field.

206. The Executive Board took note of the report on Emergency Relief Coordinator: transfer of responsibilities to the United Nations Development Programme (DP/1998/18).

X. EVALUATION

207. The Director of the Evaluation Office introduced the agenda item on evaluation by saying that there were two key issues that he wished to highlight: (a) the increased focus within UNDP on promoting learning from its evaluation exercises and strengthening substantive accountability, and (b) the increased emphasis on results and their dissemination. He said that the challenge was to ensure that the lessons learned from the more than 100 evaluations that were carried out each year at a cost of $4 million to $5 million did indeed show an impact on the programme as a whole. That meant linking monitoring with evaluation: monitoring produced regular feedback and learning through self-evaluation while periodic evaluations picked up broader, larger lessons. Obtaining the greatest value from the organization's evaluation activities meant: (a) linking evaluation results to management decisions; (b) developing a demand-driven lessons learned facility; (c) setting up an evaluation network to strengthen the evaluation and learning culture in UNDP; and (d) promoting joint evaluations.

208. The Director reported on compliance statistics for evaluations, which were quantitative indicators but which did not reveal whether lessons were being

learned and whether those lessons were reflected in organizational improvements. UNDP had set a target of having 70 per cent of all projects evaluated. By 1997, 67 per cent of projects approved in 1988 and 1989 had been evaluated. The greater challenge was to integrate evaluation into the programme cycle so that it was not just an afterthought. During the coming year, the Evaluation Office planned three independent country programme reviews and two strategic evaluations - one on the role and experience of UNDP in reintegrating displaced populations and one on a review of the relationship between UNDP and the United Nations Office for Project Services.

209. The Director reported on where UNDP was in relation to its efforts to institute a system of results-based management in the organization. The first step had been a joint study with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) on managing results, which included an assessment of the experience of other international development agencies. An initial framework paper was discussed in May 1998, which included indicators for analysing situations and for measuring progress in the fields of governance and poverty. The framework was being tested and would then be refined so that it could be put into place globally in 1999.

210. The Minister of Finance and Development Planning of Botswana welcomed the progress achieved in developing results-based monitoring and evaluation within UNDP. Evaluation was an important tool to avoid poor utilization of badly needed resources. It was imperative to demonstrate results, and, where results were not achieved, to use performance standards and criteria to improve future programmes. He reported on the cooperative efforts between UNDP and the Government of Botswana to foster development in his country. The experience of his country had shown that evaluation needed to be two-pronged: from the country perspective, it needed to show how UNDP had contributed to meeting national objectives, while from the perspective of UNDP it needed to evaluate how well UNDP operational guidelines had been followed and implemented.

211. The Minister said that the results of the evaluations had clearly shown that the major constraint to achieving the objectives of UNDP programmes had been the dearth of trained nationals. Therefore, he felt that the organization needed not only to work to build its own capacity for self-evaluation but also to help programme countries to develop their capacity to evaluate their own performance. That would help to ensure sustainability of programme evaluation activities. The Minister endorsed further decentralization to country offices, saying that would make it easier for UNDP to quickly adjust programmes to changing situations.

212. Several delegations said that the report on evaluation had been useful although some said that it seemed to focus more on quantitative measures than on analysis. A number of delegations welcomed the efforts, as detailed by the Director, to strengthen the evaluation system inside UNDP. One delegation said that the report showed that UNDP was becoming more results-oriented. Delegations spoke of the necessity to ensure that evaluation results were used within the organization. One delegation said that UNDP efforts to integrate evaluation results into programme results were laudable, particularly at the national level - a good example of the reform that was going on inside UNDP.

213. A number of delegations said that the joint evaluation with SIDA was a good idea. One delegation, speaking for another as well, said that it would like the results of the evaluations to date to be made available to the Executive Board. It also welcomed the evaluations of UNDP efforts in the area of good governance. One delegation said that the thematic evaluation on governance was critical. It also asked how the Evaluation Office fitted into the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs). Those comments were endorsed by another delegation as well.

214. One delegation, speaking for three others as well, noted that many of the discussions during the current session of the Executive Board had focused on the need to achieve results and then to make those results known. Several delegations said that showing results helped to mobilize resources. Therefore, the expectations placed on the Evaluation Office were high. Those delegations said they supported the creation of an evaluation mechanism separate from the operational lines of the organization, which they thought was a precondition for achieving objective evaluations. Delegations also felt there was a need to more systematically link the findings of evaluations to top management. Adopting a management response system would help UNDP develop into the learning organization that it was striving to be. The delegations stressed that the Evaluation Office should not become involved in operationalizing or implementing the recommendations emanating from its evaluations.

215. While welcoming progress made, several delegations were of the opinion that further work was necessary: the time lag in the completion of evaluations was often very lengthy; there was variance in the quality of the results obtained; and coverage and compliance seemed to be inadequate. With regard to the evaluations of governance activities, one delegation felt that the evaluations had been less than complete in discussing negative results and mistakes, which were an inevitable part of the learning process. It asked whether compliance with evaluation requirements was considered in the performance ratings of UNDP field staff. It also asked for regular briefings on Evaluation Office products. The delegation looked forward to stronger enforcement of regulations requiring completion of the project evaluation information sheet and the establishment of a transparent tracking system for mandatory evaluations.

216. Several delegations picked up on the theme mentioned by the Minister from Botswana and pointed out that countries that evaluated the results of their own projects were better able to sustain them. Helping countries to follow up on evaluations was crucial. Another delegation reiterated that national execution and its evaluation needed to meet the needs and requirements of the programme country concerned. The development of performance indicators needed to be treated with caution, however, to avoid one-sided conclusions: indicators needed to be agreed with the programme countries, which also wanted to become learners in the process. The same delegation asked whether the reference to cumbersome procedures in evaluating nationally executed projects referred to the procedure of the country involved or of UNDP. It was the view of the delegation that the value added that UNDP brought to the field of development was extremely difficult to quantify.

217. One delegation asked for a comment on the differences in compliance rates on evaluation among different bureaux and asked how the overall compliance rate

could be improved. One delegation asked, in particular, why the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States had had so few evaluations.

218. A number of delegations said that the development of a handbook on monitoring and evaluation was a very good first step but that training in the use of the manual had to follow and asked for more information on the training that was being provided to field staff. In that regard, one delegation said that it had the impression that effective evaluations were being carried out at the headquarters level but that that was not always true in the field. The delegation strongly supported efforts to cooperate with other agencies in monitoring and evaluation and was interested in hearing more about the Inter-Agency Working Group on Evaluation. One delegation spoke in favour of more mid-term evaluations.

Response of the Administration

219. The Director of the Evaluation Office thanked delegations for their interest and the commitment they had manifested to evaluation.

220. In response to the statement of the Minister of Botswana and other delegations, he said that capacity-building was a preoccupation of UNDP and that monitoring and evaluation were central in fostering such capacity-building. In fact, one of the things his office was trying to achieve was to have greater interaction between countries that had developed expertise in monitoring and evaluation, such as Botswana, and those that could benefit from such experience.

221. In response to the statements of delegations stressing the necessary link between evaluations and management response, he said that it was the aim of his office to help the Administrator manage the organization more effectively. He fully realized that the results of an evaluation did not end with the publication of a report but that additional work needed to be done to see that recommendations were followed up. For example, upon the conclusion of the recent evaluation of the programme approach, his office had worked in a proactive way with other bureaux in order to help them to have a better understanding of the recommendations emanating from the evaluation. If an evaluation came up with, for example, 15 or so recommendations, the Evaluation Office tried to bring 4 to 5 key recommendations that required policy decisions to the attention of the Administrator. His office was trying to do a better job of connecting evaluation, recommendations and implementation, but, of course, implementation rested with the operational bureaux.

222. In answer to a question as to why the number of evaluations had decreased, the Director said that the size of projects and programmes had grown, which meant that fewer were needed. As to why the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States had had few evaluations, he said that it was because the Bureau was relatively new and projects that had been developed since 1991 were just starting to be evaluated. In addition, few of the projects had resources over $1 million.

223. In addressing questions concerning the measurement of results, the Director said that that was a work in progress. There were no magic answers, but he felt

that UNDP had made a lot of progress. In October 1998 there would be a Development Assistance Committee (DAC) workshop/seminar on indicators. The aim of UNDP was not to reinvent anything but to make use of what was already available. At the same time, it was not desirable to add to the data collection duties of the country offices. There had been several questions about the Inter-Agency Working Group on Evaluation. He had chaired the latest session the previous week and felt that it constituted a good basis for moving ahead in the future. He also felt that it should meet more often than once a year, although not the full group.

224. On the question of linking evaluation compliance to personnel performance reviews, the Director said that that was not currently the practice and perhaps the administration should look at incentives to ensure staff compliance with evaluation needs. The tracking system for evaluation compliance was now under way. On the question of compliance, he said that it was more comprehensive than might be thought. The results were available country by country since that was how the data were received. It was true that much of the data were in the form of statistics, but his office was working hard to get more information on the substance of those evaluations.

225. On the question of external evaluations, the Director said that some had been undertaken in the past, including the 1996 thematic evaluation on environmental concerns and an evaluation of governance activities in 1997. The results of those evaluations had been and would continue to be communicated to the Executive Board.

226. As for training, UNDP had developed a training module on results-based monitoring and evaluation. It was being pilot-tested in the occupied Palestinian territory. A Canadian consulting company that had achieved good results with results-based management techniques in the past was being used to help to develop the training package.

227. Concerning joint evaluations, the Director said that there was a commitment within UNDP to do that as much as possible. For example, UNDP and UNFPA had made a commitment to carry out one strategic evaluation together, and the United Nations Development Group had agreed in principle to carry out a joint evaluation of the UNDAF in 1999, which would be different from the evaluation that UNDP was currently conducting on its own. UNDP was also working closely with DAC on the strategy for the twenty-first century.

228. In responding to delegations' queries about how results would be used at the country level, he said that the major need was a shift in thinking from outputs to outcomes. The core issue was the results in the programme countries, and he thanked the delegations of those countries for the positive things they had had to say. In the discussion of national execution evaluation procedures, the report was referring to the procedures of UNDP, not those of the countries.

229. In response to the question of why there was such a long time lag in obtaining data on compliance, the Director said that the cycle of development was 8 to 10 years and that was also true of other organizations, including the World Bank, which was currently looking at projects approved in 1988 and 1989. In terms of coverage, he said that while the total number of projects evaluated

was approximately 66 per cent, in terms of funds only 15 per cent were not evaluated. He agreed with one delegation that had said it might be necessary to increase staffing for evaluation in the future.

230. The Executive Board took note of the report on UNDP evaluation activities (DP/1998/19).

XI. UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS

231. In introducing the report of the Administrator on the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme (DP/1998/20), the Executive Coordinator noted that during the last biennium major strides had been made both in the number of volunteers in service and the range of activities performed. Highlights included the growth of the national UNV mechanism, reflecting the importance attached to that modality in national capacity-building; the greater utilization of UNV expertise in supporting activities addressing poverty, particularly those at the grass-roots level; and the increase in the number of female volunteers, who, at the end of the biennium, accounted for 35 per cent of all serving UNVs. The Executive Coordinator also noted the expanded work in human rights in support both of United Nations operations and of the field operations of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. She paid a special tribute to the three UNVs who had lost their lives serving the cause of human rights during the last two years.

232. In conjunction with the above, it was noted that in 1997 a record number of 3,620 qualified and experienced professionals from 144 nations served as UNVs in 147 developing countries and countries in transition, signifying the universality of the UNV programme in encompassing all regions of the world, providing a channel for the transfer of appropriate skills within and among regions, and fostering relationships among nations.

233. The loss of over 60 per cent of seasoned staff during the relocation of the UNV programme's headquarters to Bonn, Germany, in 1996, had presented a challenge, but also an opportunity for the UNV programme to reappraise itself. The programme reviews of 1995 and 1996, the workflow analysis of 1997 and the comprehensive internal audit of December 1997 all identified areas requiring management attention. Entering the next biennium, therefore, the UNV programme would be undergoing a period of consolidation. Actions would include stricter financial management controls, improved monitoring and evaluation systems, greater decentralization, and strengthened support to UNV Programme Officers in the field. Within that context, the Executive Coordinator requested the Executive Board to endorse the use of Special Voluntary Fund resources to underpin measures in response to the audit report and to give explicit authorization to use Special Voluntary Fund resources for thematic, cross-cutting evaluations and for supplementary monitoring of UNV projects. The Executive Coordinator noted that as focal point for the International Year of Volunteers, 2001, the UNV programme had an unparalleled opportunity to promote volunteer contributions worldwide.

234. Delegations congratulated the UNV programme for maintaining its responsiveness and relevance to the changing global environment, noting in

particular the broadened range of mechanisms that the UNV programme offered, its continued efforts to forge strategic partnerships with international, national and local bodies, and its strengthened outreach capacity at the grass-roots level. The UNV programme's success in achieving increased representation of female volunteers was also commended. One delegation noted that a particular strength of the UNV programme was that, as a provider of experienced personnel to the United Nations system as a whole, it was complementary rather than competitive. While concurring with the delegation's observation that the extent of volunteer contributions, particularly within the context of United Nations operations, did not always receive due recognition, the Executive Coordinator noted the need to share visibility with partners and further remarked that any success of the UNV programme reflected the good work of the United Nations as a whole.

235. Several delegations made special reference to the contributions of volunteers in humanitarian relief, peacekeeping and human rights activities and the considerable potential for volunteer action to act as a bridge spanning post-conflict situations to development. One delegation expressed its deep satisfaction with initiatives conducted through the White Helmets special window. Another declared its hope that more use would be made of mixed teams of international and national UNVs in such operations. It was felt that that would prove not only cost-effective but would also serve to develop a corps of committed, experienced personnel from which the international community could draw. Specific reference to the UNV programme's recent partnerships with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union was also made.

236. Delegations from programme countries expressed appreciation for the valuable contributions of UNVs in their development programmes and their impact at the grass-roots level in particular. Equally important was the channel that the UNV programme provided for their nationals to serve as UNVs and, by so doing, to foster South-South cooperation. Delegates cited, inter alia, the benefits of shared knowledge, experience and understanding of other cultures, as well as the strengthened commitment on the part of returning UNVs to serving their own communities. Several speakers also highlighted the value of the United Nations International Short Term Advisory Resources and the Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals programmes and urged that greater consideration should be given to tapping those services. Others noted the need for UNV to receive assured financial support from the donor community if it was to maintain its responsiveness to its partners.

237. The UNV programme was commended for taking steps to ensure that appropriate administrative and managerial tools were put in place both to address issues arising from the reviews and internal audit, and, with the growth of the programme and diversification of activities, to ensure continued efficiency and a service-oriented approach. In responding to concerns regarding streamlining and decentralization raised by two delegations, the Executive Coordinator advised that over 50 per cent of actions required by the audit had already been carried out and that the remainder would be completed by the end of the year. With regard to issues raised relating to transaction costs, accounting and reporting, the Executive Coordinator welcomed offers of support made by two delegations regarding the standardization of procedures and informed the

Executive Board that discussions had already been initiated with UNDP to achieve that.

238. Many delegates expressed their appreciation of the content of the overall report. It was noted, however, that it could have been strengthened by including more detailed information on new partnerships, resource flows and sourcing thereof, activities financed through the Special Voluntary Fund, the link between budgeting and programme priorities, and the targets against which performance would be measured. The Executive Coordinator assured delegates that the UNV programme would endeavour in future reporting to ensure that such information was made available. The publication of an annual report as of 1999 would also serve as an additional channel. At a more general level, it was agreed that the UNV programme and its strengths needed to be better known.

239. The framework of activities to be financed from uncommitted resources and the surplus of pro forma costs over actual costs was supported by many delegations. In responding to issues raised by delegations, the Executive Coordinator confirmed the need for the UNV programme to have its own independent evaluation facility. The UNV guidelines for evaluation were consistent with those of UNDP. Delegates were also assured that efforts would be made to coordinate more closely with partners in project evaluations. With regard to security, the Executive Coordinator confirmed that activities, including regional security workshops, would continue to be undertaken. The suggestion that the UNV programme should report on those activities was noted.

240. With reference to the Fourth UNV Intergovernmental Meeting held in December 1997, delegations noted the successful outcome of the meeting and welcomed the recommendations contained in the concluding Bonn Declaration, including the elements of Strategy 2000.

241. Several delegations reaffirmed their strong support of the International Year of Volunteers, noting that it provided an opportunity not only to promote the various volunteer services but to promote volunteer contributions and the value of voluntary work within societies. One delegation underlined the need to ensure that assuming responsibility as focal point for the International Year of Volunteers did not detract from the UNV programme's core functions; another expressed its hope that adequate resources would be made available to the UNV programme to carry out its role effectively. Several delegations expressed interest in receiving further details of the proposed framework of activities.

242. The Executive Board adopted the following decision.

98/13. United Nations Volunteers programme

The Executive Board

1. Notes the diversity in the range of work of the United Nations Volunteers and their roles, the growth of the United Nations Volunteers programme overall and, in particular, the achievement of reaching the largest number of serving volunteers;

2. Also notes the key messages of the Fourth Intergovernmental Meeting, captured in the Bonn Declaration;

3. Commends the United Nations Volunteers programme for continuing its efforts to ensure relevance through the launching and implementation of Strategy 2000;

4. Notes the issues identified by the internal management audit and recognizes the work under way by the United Nations Volunteers programme to respond to its findings;

5. Welcomes the decision to proclaim 2001 as the International Year of Volunteers;

6. Approves the proposals for the use of the one-time Special Voluntary Fund surplus, totalling $1.8 million, to implement the recommendations of the internal management audit;

7. Requests the United Nations Volunteers programme to report at the third regular session 1998 on the management of the reserve for security and medical evacuation needs in the context of the annual review of the financial situation;

8. Decides that it is appropriate to finance from the Special Voluntary Fund strategic and cross-cutting thematic evaluations and to supplement the monitoring of United Nations Volunteers and projects executed by the United Nations Volunteers programme.

19 June 1998

XII. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

243. The discussion of the question of resource mobilization was opened by the President of the Executive Board, who reported on the work of the Open-ended, Ad Hoc Working Group on the UNDP Funding Strategy. He said that he was pleased with the progress of the Working Group to date and that it had met nine times to discuss the substantive elements of the work plan. Topics addressed at meetings of the Working Group included current and historical perspectives on UNDP funding, determination of UNDP funding requirements, current and future UNDP hedging practices, criteria for setting UNDP core funding targets, and the link between the UNDP communication, information and advocacy policy and its link to resource mobilization.

244. The President noted that a prominent issue for the Working Group was the question of predictability of funding, stressing that both greater predictability and a greater volume of resources were critical. The next Working Group meetings would examine the issue of burden-sharing. The Working Group would meet again later in the summer, with the aim of presenting its report and recommendations to the Executive Board at its third regular session 1998.

245. The Administrator spoke about the issue of resource mobilization, saying that the overriding challenge for 1998 was to reverse the decline in contributions to core resources. He also spoke of the need to put funding on a more stable and assured basis. He complimented the Working Group on its work to date and said that although it had concentrated on the central issue - core resources - the secretariat was also looking at such non-core mechanisms as partnerships with the European Commission and the private sector. In discussing non-core funding, he also reported on the initial grants that had been made by the United Nations Foundation, Inc., established by Ted Turner. He looked forward to the final report of the Working Group and bringing to fruition a strategy that would make the funding of UNDP predictable, assured and sustained and that would achieve the volume of core resources needed for UNDP to carry out its mission.

246. One delegation, speaking for three others as well, said that although they shared a strong commitment to multilateralism and to UNDP, they felt they were shouldering a disproportionate share of the funding for the organization. An overdependence on a limited number of donors carried risks for its long-term financial sustainability. This was particularly regrettable in that UNDP had made progress towards becoming a more focused organization at the same time that it had played a coordinating and facilitating role in the ongoing United Nations reform process. While continuing their own level of support, the four delegations urged other countries to make a greater contribution as well.

247. Another delegation said that continuing efforts needed to be made to keep parliamentarians and government officials aware of development needs and to try to reverse the decline in official development assistance. One delegation stressed that it was also necessary to be realistic about current conditions and to increase the effectiveness of the financial resources that were available. Along the same lines, another delegation said that it was not just a question of improving the organization, as desirable as that was, but of the lack of political will to support multilateralism, and that could only be addressed at the highest political levels. Several delegations mentioned that results-based budgeting could be an effective tool.

248. The delegation of one programme country highlighted the fact that there was a commendable spirit of partnership within the Working Group. Echoing that, several other programme countries said that while they welcomed the work of the Working Group, namely, trying to address the serious nature of the decline in core resources, it must be kept clear that any funding strategy must safeguard the character of UNDP, i.e., its neutrality and universality. It especially needed to be kept in mind that all programmes were, and had to remain, country-driven.

249. Speaking on the predictability of funding, several delegations said that their parliamentary procedures and/or financial regulations made it impossible for them at that stage to make multi-year pledges. One delegation said that the voluntary nature of contributions to UNDP needed to be stressed and that multi-year pledges, while no doubt helpful to the organization, violated that voluntary principle. The same delegation said that it would work with its Government and UNDP to see how it might be possible to increase multi-bilateral funding. Another delegation, while acknowledging that all contributions to UNDP

were necessarily voluntary, suggested that perhaps it was a bad strategy to insist too much on the word "voluntary" when talking to Governments, etc. - that gave them a ready excuse to cut funding in the face of other national priorities and constraints.

250. The Executive Board took note of the oral report of the President on the Open-ended, Ad Hoc Working Group on the UNDP Funding Strategy.

Round-table mechanism

251. The Associate Administrator made introductory remarks reviewing the round-table mechanism. He said that it was a notable example of a coordinated United Nations approach to combating world poverty. He said that programme countries needed forums in which they could mobilize external assistance that, in addition to their own domestic resources, could help them to meet their development needs. The round-table mechanism was one such forum. It had evolved in the 25 years of its existence from an instrument for policy dialogue between programme countries and donor countries to one that included a wide range of national and international partners, both governmental and non-governmental, and included the private sector as well.

252. In recent years, the number of round-table countries had increased to include Angola, the Congo, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Namibia. Chad, Gambia and Mali were preparing for round-table meetings. UNDP was committed to working with programme countries and other partners to adjust and strengthen the round-table mechanism further and was looking forward to carrying out a full evaluation of the mechanism.

253. Several delegations said that they agreed on the usefulness of the round-table mechanism and congratulated UNDP on taking the lead in coordinating the mechanism. They asked that the organization continue to work to improve it. Another delegation pointed out that the round-table mechanism could facilitate private sector support and could focus not just on official development assistance but also trade, investment and debt relief.

254. One delegation agreed with the Associate Administrator that it was necessary to sensitize partners to the strategic needs of the programme country prior to the round-table meeting, which should not lose sight of the goals of the programme country. It also agreed that the success of the mechanism required the commitment of the programme country.

255. One delegation suggested that UNDP be careful in the way the round-table mechanism was used so that it did not give rise to false hopes in the programme country. Several other delegations concurred. One delegation said that the round-table mechanism had great value and should be used as appropriate but should not lead to a multiplicity of meetings.

256. The key to the success of a round-table, according to one delegation, was to have as frank a policy dialogue as possible. The same delegation agreed with the Associate Administrator that the round-table mechanism could provide a forum for applying the 20/20 Initiative in getting programme countries to pledge to allocate 20 per cent of budget expenditures to basic social services, which

could then be matched by donor contributions. The delegation said that that offered opportunities for programme countries to increase investment in basic social services.

257. The Associate Administrator thanked delegations for the views expressed.

258. The Executive Board took note of the report on the round-table mechanism (DP/1998/CRP.2).

XIII. COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS AND RELATED MATTERS

Myanmar

259. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific introduced the note by the Administrator on assistance to Myanmar (DP/1998/21), which sought the Executive Board's approval for UNDP assistance to Myanmar for the period mid-1999 to end-2001. The document, which provided key considerations and criteria for continuation of the Human Development Initiative-Extension (HDI-E) and proposals for continuation of the humanitarian assistance begun by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in northern Rakhine State.

260. The proposals presented to the Executive Board were formulated following a process of intensive consultations with grass-roots communities, United Nations agencies, diplomatic missions, and civil society organizations, and were developed by a small team of country office colleagues and headquarters staff, assisted by a senior international expert. The Assistant Administrator emphasized that all proposals conformed fully with the guidelines outlined in Governing Council decision 93/21 and Executive Board decisions 96/1 and 98/4.

261. Delegations commented favourably on the work of UNDP in Myanmar in favour of sustainable development and the eradication of poverty and expressed their appreciation of the focus on targeting the poor. Several delegations encouraged UNDP to continue to adhere to the guidelines of Governing Council decision 93/21, while others expressed the hope that conditions would soon allow UNDP to resume normal programming. Some delegations noted the positive feedback from their embassies in Yangon on UNDP grass-roots activities and the regular dialogue maintained with civil society organizations. One delegation particularly emphasized the need for continued dialogue with the National League for Democracy. Delegations were appreciative of UNDP efforts to maintain both formal and informal consultations on its activities in Myanmar.

262. Several delegations commented on the proposed programme of development assistance for the northern Rakhine State; some stated that UNHCR, which was currently providing assistance to the returnees in the area, should continue its protection and monitoring role following its phasing-out by the end of 1999. One delegation offered support through its Human Resources Development Fund. Some delegations noted that a number of project evaluations had been carried out and looked forward to receiving more information on that in due course. One delegation, supported by another, welcomed the implementation of micro-credit and income-generation activities by non-governmental organizations.

263. Delegations expressed their support for the organization's continued assistance to Myanmar within the framework of the HDI-E, and the extension of that support for a programme of development assistance in northern Rakhine State.

264. The Assistant Administrator assured the Executive Board that UNDP had taken note of all of their comments and would follow them very closely. He thanked Executive Board members for their useful guidance and support of UNDP activities in Myanmar. UNDP would continue to work closely with UNHCR in northern Rakhine State.

265. The delegation of Myanmar expressed its appreciation to UNDP and to the Executive Board. It recalled the technical assistance that had been provided by UNDP to Myanmar since 1961, first through regular programming and, since 1993, in accordance with specific Governing Council and Executive Board mandates. It noted that the sustainability of UNDP assistance in the long term would rest with the national authorities and on the utilization of national bodies and local expertise. It urged UNDP to consider the adoption of regular programming in the near future to benefit all the peoples of Myanmar.

266. The Executive Board adopted the following decision.

98/14. Assistance to Myanmar

The Executive Board

1. Notes that continued funding of project activities in the sectors previously outlined in Governing Council decision 93/21, and confirmed by Executive Board decision 96/1, is estimated at $50 million for the period mid-1999 to end-2001;

2. Authorizes the Administrator, on a project-by-project basis, to approve HDI-E project extensions up to $36.9 million from target for resource assignment from the core (TRAC) resources for the current resource planning period, and up to $13.1 million from the TRAC resources for the next resource planning period, as they become available;

3. Authorizes the Administrator to mobilize, in consultation with the other United Nations funds and programmes concerned, non-core resources for a United Nations system-wide programme of assistance to northern Rakhine State, through appropriate mechanisms and modalities;

4. Requests the Administrator to continue to provide the Executive Board, on an annual basis, with a report on the progress and challenges in the implementation of project activities of the Human Development Initiative.

19 June 1998

Belarus

267. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States provided the Executive Board with updated information on the implementation of the country cooperation framework (CCF) for Belarus, which had been approved in 1997 with the provision that the Executive Board be kept informed about its human rights component. The general lines of developments in the implementation of that component were included in document DP/1998/22, and the Assistant Administrator provided the Executive Board with additional details on recent developments. He said that the Executive Board's decision had helped UNDP to maintain a constant dialogue with the Government of Belarus, which had enabled UNDP to make progress with the Government and civil society in carrying out the activities covered by the CCF.

268. One delegation said that it supported the underpinnings of UNDP support to Belarus, including its support for democratization and civil society, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs). However, it did not agree with the statement in document DP/1998/22 that Belarus was "... at a critical juncture in its transition from a centralized form of government to a decentralized, democratic society" (para. 2). The delegation said that, unlike its neighbours, Belarus had reasserted authoritarian controls over society and had silenced the media, civil society and NGOs. It urged UNDP to exercise extreme caution in implementing its programme in view of the worsening political environment. UNDP needed to avoid duplication with other organizations working in the same areas and to see that there was a unified approach to the human rights issue in Belarus.

269. One delegation, endorsed by two others, said that it was generally favourable to the UNDP contribution in Belarus, particularly in the areas of democratization and human rights. It asked to be kept informed on a yearly basis on the pace of programme implementation. The delegation commended the organization's innovative and creative fund-raising efforts, which included working with the private sector, foundations, the European Union and Governments.

270. One delegation, speaking for another delegation as well, also said that it supported UNDP efforts, particularly in strengthening cooperation with NGOs and civil society. It was pleased that the work of UNDP was consistent with and complementary to the work of the European Union to strengthen civil society. It hoped that UNDP had the human resources needed to follow up on its activities. Another delegation noted that Belarus had asked for assistance in establishing a human rights institute. UNDP support for use of the Internet, to the mass media, and in favour of a United Nations research centre in the university were all aimed at facilitating the establishment of such an institution.

271. The representative of Belarus thanked UNDP for its assistance and noted the support being given in the above-mentioned areas. It hoped that assistance would not be reduced.

272. The Assistant Administrator agreed with the accuracy of the statement concerning the transition. He was optimistic but had stressed the words "critical juncture" in his statement. UNDP would continue to work with the

Government on the transition. He urged countries that were impressed with UNDP efforts to help out with financial assistance. The Resident Representative in Minsk would discuss the needs of the programme with representatives of potential donor countries. He said that UNDP would be pleased to report annually to the Executive Board on the implementation of the human rights component of the CCF for Belarus.

273. The Executive Board took note of the report on the implementation of the human rights component of the first country cooperation framework for Belarus (DP/1998/22).

Papua New Guinea

274. The Minister for Bougainville Affairs of the Government of Papua New Guinea addressed the Executive Board. He said that his Government appreciated the assistance of UNDP in potential donor coordination to help meet the needs of the island of Bougainville following the recent peace agreement. After nine years, peace had come to Bougainville but the Government of Papua New Guinea did not have the necessary funds to carry out the reconstruction that was required, especially given the drought that had afflicted the country during the preceding year. UNDP support would be critical; its $2 million contribution was going towards rebuilding communities and their mechanism for governance. The Government was committed to the peace process, and the Minister was convinced that with the assistance of the international community it would be a success.

XIV. COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION PROGRAMME

275. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau of Resources and External Affairs opened the discussion of agenda item 14 by saying that an effective communication and information programme was vital to the success of UNDP and that the organization had made significant progress in developing such a programme in recent years. The communication strategy had two main objectives: to sharpen the profile and visibility of UNDP in both donor and programme countries; and to promote understanding and support for UNDP.

276. The Director of the Division of Public Affairs said that in the early years of UNDP, communication, information and advocacy had not been considered priorities because there had been worldwide, broad-based support for development assistance and for multilateral cooperation through the United Nations. That, however, had changed. As a result, in July 1995 UNDP had adopted a corporate communication and advocacy strategy, which was reviewed and updated as necessary. He then discussed various communication tools and methods that the organization was using to carry out the strategy.

277. Several delegations thanked the Director of the Division of Public Affairs for his introduction and for the excellent work that his Division was doing, saying that the enthusiasm he exhibited was a necessary element if the organization was to have a successful communication and information programme. Some delegations did say, however, that the oral report included much information on the different communications efforts that had been carried out but that the goals and targets of those efforts were not always clear. Another

delegation said that it found that the communication strategy as presented lacked a systematic approach. One delegation noted that the budgetary implications called for in decision 97/17 were missing in the Director's introduction. Another delegation said the Executive Board needed a costed plan in order to take a decision about the communication and information programme and asked, in the future, for more information on budget costs.

278. One delegation prefaced its remarks by saying that communication was an area in which everyone thought he or she was an expert. The delegation found that UNDP was doing good work in the area of communication. In its view, the communication strategy should concentrate on opinion leaders and should work to form their opinions on development questions. But that was long-term work: public opinion could not be changed overnight.

279. One delegation said that it agreed with the Administrator when he had said that in order to have a clear message you needed to have a clear organizational definition. One delegation said that it was clear that UNDP needed a clear and assertive communication strategy. In that regard, it said that it was impossible to overstate the importance of publicizing success stories. One delegation agreed that any communication strategy had to answer some fundamental questions: what were its goals; what messages worked best; and what results were expected? Another delegation said that the strategy needed to present a clear idea of its target groups and then decide what messages to send to different target groups and via what media. One delegation said that the communication strategy had to be clearly linked to the other goals of the organization; it felt that those links were not always clear. One delegation pointed out that when policies were being developed, consideration should already be given to how that policy would be communicated.

280. One delegation argued for a thematic approach in the communication strategy, saying that poverty eradication, sustainable livelihoods and gender equality needed to be the entry points. Another delegation urged that communication activities stress that development was a fundamental right and highlight the number and plight of poor people in the world. One delegation agreed with others that it was very difficult to build a profile in a short amount of time. That delegation had doubts about the value of creating a UNDP profile as such: it felt that communication efforts should include more on United Nations work in development as a whole. Another delegation supported that point of view, saying that work should be done to increase the profile of the United Nations; the average person did not differentiate between United Nations agencies. A third delegation wondered whether greater communication efforts by different United Nations bodies were leading to increased competition between agencies.

281. A number of delegations said that if UNDP was to be successful in bringing greater public attention to the issue of development, there was a need to find allies in its communication efforts among other organizations. One delegation said that it had the sense that at the country level UNDP worked with allies for coordinated advocacy but that not as much seemed to be done at the global level. Another delegation said that it was necessary to cooperate with other agencies in changing public opinion not just in favour of UNDP but also in favour of multilateral assistance as such.

282. Several delegations stated the view that effective communication was an important tool in resource mobilization. One delegation said that one of the necessary goals of any communication strategy was to convince taxpayers of the valuable work that UNDP was doing. In order to do so, it needed to send a clear message to constituencies about UNDP and what it was accomplishing. Several other delegations agreed that UNDP needed to present a clear, positive image in traditional donor countries. One delegation said that resource mobilization and communication were closely linked and that "visibility" and "impact" were key words. Another delegation said that in its view the oral report did not make clear what the communication strategy would do in the future to help put UNDP on a firm financial footing. Another delegation said that UNDP needed to have clear, concise success stories linked to resource mobilization efforts.

283. One delegation pointed out, however, that the link between communication and resource mobilization had to be subtle if it was to be effective: any communication product that was too obviously an appeal to the wallet would not be listened to. Another delegation said that while it was important to mobilize resources, that alone was not sufficient - it was necessary to affect the consciousness of the world's countries on development issues and that included reaching out to young people, not just to opinion leaders. Two other delegations agreed with that viewpoint. Another delegation said that all stakeholders needed to be informed at all stages of the policy.

284. Delegations felt that measurement of the impact of UNDP communication efforts needed to be strengthened. Not enough work had been done on evaluating the impact of different communication products on different audiences. Of course, the Executive Board realized that it was difficult to measure such impact. One delegation also said that it was aware that it was difficult to make an impact when there was so much competition for attention. In the case of communication activities designed to help in resource mobilization, the measures should be tied to academicians, Governments and parliamentarians. Products should be planned carefully to reach desired targets, especially parliamentarians. One delegation suggested carrying out market research so that the organization could test the best ways to convey its messages so that they were relevant to the lives of target audiences. One delegation summed up the issue by saying that UNDP needed to have a better idea about what went on in the heads of the readers of its brochures, viewers of its videos, etc.

285. Several delegations said that they felt it would be useful to have more of the organization's resources devoted to communication activities. One delegation said that in an era of diminishing resources, one of the best ways to counter that would be to expand communication efforts. The external environment meant that more resources needed to be put into communication, which must reflect the priority of the organization.

286. One delegation said that the most important advocacy work was done at the programme country level and that those activities had to be linked to the efforts of programme countries themselves. In doing so, another delegation pointed out, full consideration needed to be given to relevant national and regional factors. One delegation said that a lot could be accomplished by sponsoring media-related events in programme countries, especially events that were tied to larger international media events. One delegation cited several

examples of successful media events in its country, including the annual publication of the Human Development Report, which had been found to be an effective advocacy medium. One delegation said that UNDP should make use of national media professionals at local levels to get its message across. Another delegation said that in programme countries, academicians, religious and political leaders, the media, and the representatives of donor countries all had to be part of the audience. In that regard, nationally known Goodwill Ambassadors could be a useful framework to attract the public's attention.

287. One delegation said that it was pleased that UNDP was encouraging the growth of a culture of communication inside the organization. Another delegation said that fostering such a culture included incorporating communication into organizational training, which, it noted, UNDP was doing. A third delegation said that the culture of communication started at the top, and it felt, therefore, that the main spokesperson for the organization should be the Administrator; he should show the human face of the organization.

288. Several delegations asked specific questions and offered comments on other issues relating to communication. One delegation asked if any of the publications were saleable. It also asked why Danny Glover had been chosen as a Goodwill Ambassador, saying that he was better known for his work as a human rights activist while the focus of UNDP was on poverty alleviation. Another delegation endorsed the concept of international Goodwill Ambassadors, saying that they could prove to be very valuable.

289. One delegation offered a practical suggestion: communication programmes should target embassies of donor countries in programme countries. It suggested that resident coordinators talk to those embassies about various UNDP activities because the information would then be fed back to capitals.

290. One delegation pointed out that a survey had been carried out in September 1997 to analyse the impact of Choices magazine and should have been available. One delegation said that the videotape that had been shown to the Executive Board about UNDP did not seem to differentiate that organization from a number of others that were doing similar work. The delegation suggested having a "year of communication" in 1999, and it wondered whether UNDP had thought of setting up national chapters to serve as advocates for the organization. Another delegation asked if it would be possible to use former United Nations officials as national liaison officers.

291. One delegation said that in addition to the traditional print media, more needed to be done in audio-visual media as well. The same delegation asked that UNDP step up its efforts to make its communication products available in as many languages as possible, saying that, for example, all important publications should be available in Chinese.

292. One delegation mentioned a reference in the Director's statement about working with local mayors. Mayors were usually urban-based while the really poor were in rural areas. Another delegation said that the private sector should also be targeted by communication activities. Another delegation asked if corporate bodies and manufacturers could be targeted to get in-kind contributions.

Response of the Administration

293. The Administrator said that no subject had taken up more of his attention over the last five years than the question of how UNDP could best communicate its efforts in support of development. He himself came from the NGO world, where for decades they had never worried about profile and communication. All of that had changed. In the past, resident representatives had kept their heads down and had not wanted publicity. Now, an Administrator, he was trying to make UNDP a more extroverted organization. He had been working to de-train resident representatives out of the habits of the past and had, for example, urged them to take journalists with them when they visited projects in the field. He gave high marks to BREA and the work it was doing. However, he wanted to warn the Executive Board that it was not possible to go from being unknown to becoming a household word. The goal must be to develop an organization that was known and respected by high-impact audiences in large donor countries. He said that he felt that such recognition of UNDP and its work already existed in programme countries. In answer to suggestions that more money be spent on communication, the Administrator said that a lot of the organization's declining resources were already spoken for, unfortunately.

294. The Administrator said that he agreed that it was necessary to work with allies and said that the members of UNDG were working together to create a complementary communication strategy. There was, he acknowledged, a certain amount of competition among agencies. But it was also true that they would rise or fall together. He said that he wanted to continue the dialogue with the Executive Board on the UNDP communication strategy: if the Board was not the biggest supporter of UNDP, then who would be? He counted on the continued guidance and support of the Board.

295. The Director of the Division of Public Affairs said that he was encouraged by the support and the suggestions and that he had taken note of them all. He agreed with the view that the organization needed to work to get public acceptance of multilateralism, not just of UNDP. The objectives of the UNDP communication strategy included raising awareness of the economic and social work of the United Nations as a whole. That could be of intrinsic help to UNDP as well. In answer to one question, he said that the themes on the video shown to the Board were ones that were designed to highlight the problems of development, not just to showcase UNDP.

296. The Director said that the corporate communication strategy was global in scope; nevertheless, in bringing the UNDP message to all stakeholders, he and his staff were well aware that it was necessary to tailor messages to different audiences and that it was also necessary to decide what were the best means of reaching a target audience, whether print media, video, or any number of other methods. UNDP was doing more evaluation of the various methodologies being used. These evaluations included research, surveys, in-depth interviews and discussions with donor countries on the results they had obtained with their communication tools in order to see what worked best in reaching different target audiences. The Division held a retreat twice a year to sharpen the information and advocacy programme.

297. In response to the view expressed by several delegations that a stronger and clearer profile of the organization was a valuable tool in mobilizing resources, the Director agreed. However, he said that having a strong profile did not automatically lead to more funding. He sensed that the world was moving away from a belief in multilateralism and there was only so much that UNDP could do on its own to change that.

298. In response to specific questions, the Director said that the example of a programme targeting mayors was an illustration of dealing with elected officials even at the remotest levels; many other examples could have been used. The Director agreed with the delegation that had said that UNDP needed to take a long-term approach but that did not mean that they should not use short-term methods for specific targets. He informed delegations that the results of the survey concerning Choices were available.

299. The Director said that the new Goodwill Ambassador, Danny Glover, was known as a spokesman on poverty eradication. In choosing such Ambassadors, the aim would be to choose personalities who could furnish powerful voices to articulate UNDP messages. The Director said that some publications were sold, the most notable being the Human Development Report.

300. On budgetary questions, the Director said he would return to that at a later time. It was a difficult exercise because not all of the organization's expenditures on communication activities were part of the Division of Public Affairs. But it was something that must be done.

301. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau of Resources and External Affairs concluded the discussion by thanking the delegations for their valuable feedback. From the discussion, he had extracted eleven action points that UNDP needed to take: intensify the culture of communication; project the work of UNDP within the context of the work of the United Nations; establish clear and focused objectives to raise the organization's visibility; develop clearer messages; streamline information materials; prioritize constituencies; intensify partnerships with programme countries; develop differentiated strategies for donor countries; evaluate the impact of existing materials; provide a more analytical report to the Executive Board; and communicate more effectively with the Executive Board.

302. The Executive Board adopted the following decision.

98/15. UNDP communication and information policy

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of document DP/1998/23, in which the Administrator outlines the advances made in the implementation of the UNDP communication, advocacy and information strategy;

2. Welcomes the progress that has taken place since 1995 in creating better visibility and awareness for UNDP and the United Nations system among various target audiences;

3. Encourages the Administrator to emphasize results in the UNDP communication policy as well as the linkage between communication and advocacy and resource mobilization;

4. Supports the efforts of the Administrator to promote and increase the visibility of UNDP in order to expand public awareness of the scope and effectiveness of the Programme and its contribution to the goals of sustainable human development, bearing in mind that communication strategies should be tailored to fit the different target audiences;

5. Invites the Administrator to make a presentation to the Executive Board at its first regular session 1999 that will outline, within the UNDP corporate communication and advocacy strategy, the key areas that will respond to current communication needs, bearing in mind decision 97/17 and comments made by delegations at the annual session 1998;

6. Requests the Administrator to present to the Executive Board at its annual session 1999 a plan of action to implement the key areas identified at the first regular session 1999, including its budgetary implications.

19 June 1998

XV. UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR PROJECT SERVICES

303. The Executive Director introduced the annual report (DP/1998/24 and the statistical annex DP/1998/24/Add.2) on the activities of the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) in 1997, as well as the report on follow-up to recommendations of the report of the Board of Auditors (DP/1998/25). He also distributed the unaudited financial statements for the year ended 1997 and released the English version of the recently completed 1997 Annual Report, noting that the report was also being made available on the UNOPS Internet site (www.unops.org).

304. With regard to document DP/1998/24, the Executive Director pointed out that the report was based on the 1997 UNOPS business plan provided to the Executive Board at its third regular session 1997. He underlined that in preparing the report, UNOPS had been mindful of the suggestions of the Board at the annual session 1997, in particular the recommendations to link the report with the qualitative objectives stated in the business plan. Citing the continued upward trend in the acquisition of new business and of client diversification, he reported another strong performance that was consistent with the self-financing principle. Referring to the UNOPS proposals regarding information systems, the Executive Director explained the project-oriented approach being taken by UNOPS to the integrated management information system and the year 2000 issues, and requested that the Board approve the UNOPS request for establishment of a post of Chief Information Officer at the D-1 level effective from 1 July 1998.

305. Several delegations commended the Executive Director for the quality of the documents he had submitted. One delegation additionally appreciated the inclusion of the section of document DP/1998/24 discussing the hurdles

encountered by UNOPS, noting that it helped to convey a full, realistic picture of the organization and the challenges that it faced.

306. Several delegations expressed the hope that UNOPS would continue to focus on improving its rostering systems with a view to broadening further the procurement of goods, services, and expertise from a wider range of sources, particularly from developing countries. In that context, two delegations underscored that a main priority of UNOPS should be to continue improving its own procurement system so as to strengthen such capacities in developing countries. One delegation identified specific areas in which it considered that it could offer competitive products and services.

307. The consolidation of human resources functions for project and administrative staff under a single management structure was welcomed by several delegations. Some delegations inquired about the ongoing UNOPS decentralization process and asked for further clarification on the gains UNOPS anticipated through decentralization. Several delegations noted with satisfaction the diversification that UNOPS was achieving in its clientele, and urged that the process be continued.

308. Several delegations supported the request for the establishment of the D-1 level post of Chief Information Officer, with one mentioning that its support was subject to the assurance that UNOPS would have sufficient income to cover the costs of the post. Another requested further information on whether the proposed Chief Information Officer post responded only to UNOPS needs, or whether it had a bearing on other United Nations agencies and organizations as well.

309. Several delegations requested further information about UNOPS demining activities and their relationship with demining activities of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the United Nations and of UNDP.

Response of the administration

310. The Executive Director thanked the delegations for their encouraging and supportive comments, making special note of UNOPS complete agreement with and commitment to the priority it attached to assisting and helping to build meaningful capacity in developing countries. In that regard, the Executive Board was informed of the activities that UNOPS was undertaking to improve its rostering systems, both on its own and in conjunction with common services initiatives of the United Nations system. The Executive Director also clarified that UNOPS procurement was already carried out in accordance with international competitive bidding practices, which were open to all countries. He encouraged delegations to inform interested parties within their respective countries of the frequent announcement of procurement opportunities on the UNOPS Internet site.

311. In response to queries on decentralization, the Executive Director outlined the basic principles of the UNOPS decentralization strategy: (a) improving service; (b) formation of integrated teams under a single management accountability structure; and (c) regular review of financial viability. He went on to note that, in conjunction with the consolidation of the management

functions for human resources, two senior staff members had recently moved from project to headquarters management assignments.

312. The Executive Director indicated that UNOPS demining activities were carried out on behalf of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the United Nations and of UNDP, with the UNOPS role being primarily operational in nature. He cited several examples of such collaboration and went on to mention that UNOPS was currently carrying out demining activities in 13 different countries.

313. With regard to the inquiries on the Chief Information Officer post, the Executive Director clarified that all UNOPS posts, including the proposed Chief Information Officer post, were established subject to the principle that sufficient income would be generated to cover the cost of the post. It was explained that the creation of the Chief Information Officer function was intended both to respond to UNOPS specific information management needs, but also was in keeping with similar practices being advocated by the ACC Information Systems Coordination Committee and that was being applied in other United Nations organizations.

314. The Executive Board adopted the following decision.

98/16. Activities of the United Nations Office for Project Services

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Office for Project Services (DP/1998/24 and DP/1998/24/Add.2*), further noting that UNOPS continues to operate successfully in accordance with the self-financing principle;

2. Requests the Management Coordination Committee to assist and guide the Executive Director of the United Nations Office for Project Services in finding appropriate responses to those areas identified in document DP/1998/24 in which UNOPS progress is slow or where unexpected difficulties are being encountered;

3. Approves the establishment of the post of Chief Information Officer at the D-1 level with effect from 1 July 1998.

12 June 1998

UNDP/UNFPA joint segment

XVI. INTERNAL OVERSIGHT

A. UNDP

UNDP report

315. In his introduction to the discussion of the report on internal audit and oversight activities (DP/1998/26), the Associate Administrator reported to the Executive Board on certain recent developments that had taken place in the area of internal oversight. These included the issuance of an accountability bulletin to all staff and of the selection of a number of units on a trial basis to take part in the control self-assessment system. There had been a number of regular meetings of the Management Review and Oversight Committee, including the participation of the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services.

316. The Director of the Office of Audit and Performance Review (OAPR) said that he was encouraged by the change in the culture of accountability that had taken place over the last two years at UNDP. This manifested itself, for example, in the greatly increased demand for the services of his office. The training for new resident representatives included a session on accountability, and there was greater discussion within the organization of accountability issues. OAPR had followed a policy of trying to help all parts of the organization to understand what was acceptable and what was not rather than focusing solely on what had gone wrong. Along with three headquarters support units, the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific would be the first operational bureau to volunteer to put the self-assessment system into effect. He reported that the investigation of the Reserve for Field Accommodation was ongoing but he believed that his office was reaching the beginning of the end of it. Because of the nature of some of the allegations, he was not at liberty to discuss any of the findings as yet.

317. Several delegations expressed the view that document DP/1998/26 dealt with the internal audit and oversight activities of UNDP fairly, pointing out strengths and weaknesses in the area. Delegations said that it demonstrated that an impressive balance of work had been accomplished. Several delegations also said that they were pleased that a culture of accountability was becoming more ingrained inside UNDP. One mentioned, however, that it would appear that, as a result, the staff of OAPR was being overworked. One delegation supported the recommendation contained in paragraph 51 of document DP/1998/26 that UNDP continue to strengthen its internal audit and oversight resources. Another delegation asked, however, where the resources for such strengthening would come from.

318. Several delegations raised the issue presented in paragraph 18 on the amount of time that resident representatives spent on activities relating to their roles as resident coordinators and to the suggestion that United Nations Volunteers (UNVs) be used to assist them in those functions. Some delegations said that while they recognized the burdens on resident representatives caused by the coordinating function, they thought it advisable to make use of national staffing before turning to UNVs. One delegation asked whether voluntary

contributions intended for UNDP were being spent on coordinating the work of other agencies.

319. Several delegations were concerned about the problems arising from the increased use of national execution modalities that were discussed in paragraphs 38-47 of document DP/1998/26. Delegations agreed that the increasing use of national execution was a positive trend while recognizing that it also presented certain challenges. One delegation said that the openness of UNDP dealing with the problems caused by increased national execution was commendable and asked that the organization make finding the solutions to those problems a priority. Another delegation wondered if the organization was not proceeding too quickly in increasing the use of national execution mechanisms. Similarly, one delegation expressed the view that the problem was long term and that more attention needed to be given to ascertaining the availability of local expertise before deciding to use national execution modalities. Another delegation asked for elaboration on the follow-up to address the problems that were mentioned in paragraph 43.

320. One delegation brought the attention of the Executive Board to paragraph 38, in which it was stated that Governments were required to submit audited financial reports for nationally executed projects and programmes, which were monitored by OAPR. The delegation said that the requirement was reasonable but emphasized that those audited reports must follow national auditing rules. It stated that if Governments were to have responsibility they must also have authority. In that regard, several delegations said that the concern expressed in paragraph 42 (f) - implementation of projects by autonomous institutions not in the programme country's chain of accountability - was one that UNDP needed to be conscious of. Again, they asked how could Governments be responsible if they had no authority over the civil society organizations involved. One delegation said that the problems mentioned in paragraph 42 (c), i.e., failure to familiarize all parties concerned with financial requirements, was the cause of many of the problems relating to national execution and needed to be addressed. It said that many of the same issues had been raised in the 1996 audit and wondered if progress had been made since then.

321. Several delegations mentioned that they supported the idea of joint audits with other organizations, such as UNICEF, in areas where it would be appropriate. Some of those delegations expressed the desire that the number of such joint audits be increased and suggested that that was something that UNDG could take up. One delegation said that joint audits should be carried out with other agencies as well.

322. Delegations had several specific questions relating to information contained in document DP/1998/26. It was stated in paragraph 26 that many tripartite reviews had not been held or had not been submitted in a timely fashion. Delegations asked about the scope of the problem and what was being done about it. One delegation asked about paragraph 21, in which it was stated that some government contributions towards the costs of maintaining UNDP country offices were outstanding. Again, what was the scope of the problem and how was it being addressed? What was being done about the low programme delivery rates mentioned in paragraph 25?

323. In regard to paragraph 19, one delegation noted the rise in non-core funding, which was a cause of concern, and expressed the view that the Administrator himself should sign all such agreements. Another delegation said that UNDP should draft a set of procedures for cost-sharing agreements. One delegation, seconded by another, asked for more details on the status of the investigation into the reserve for field accommodations. It also asked for further information on the relationship of UNDP, UNOPS and UNFPA with the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) of the United Nations Secretariat. Specifically, if there had been joint audits, investigations or inspections with OIOS, it asked that they be made available to the Executive Board. One delegation noted that there were several items in the report - such as the possession of more than the authorized number of vehicles in some countries - that would raise red flags among national parliamentarians and authorities.

Response of the UNDP administration

324. The Associate Administrator thanked the delegations for their expressions of support, saying that he believed that UNDP really was developing a true accountability culture within the organization. In addressing the question of the demands on the time of resident representatives, he said that it was an issue that needed to be looked at closely, including collectively with other United Nations agencies and organizations through UNDG. The suggestion that the Resident Coordinator make use of the services of UNVs had been made by OAPR and was not official UNDP policy. The Director of OAPR said that his office had made the suggestion as one way of finding a solution to a difficult situation in a time of scarce resources. Following suggestions made by members of the Executive Board, the Associate Administrator said that it might also be advisable to look into the possibility of making greater use of national staff to help with coordination responsibilities. In fact, that was already being tried in a few countries.

325. The Associate Administrator addressed the issues concerning national execution by saying that UNDP had formulated comprehensive guidelines on national execution. The findings of the audit would be taken into account in reviewing those guidelines. It was a situation that the organization would follow very closely. The Director of OAPR pointed out that national execution had to be looked at not just as an execution modality but also as an important capacity-building exercise. It might, he said, be expedient to hire international personnel to carry out projects, but that meant that when project funding ended and the personnel left, they would not be leaving any enhanced capacity behind. He said that it was not a problem that was subject to simple solutions and no doubt would be part of audit reports in the future as well. He did say that he thought that sometimes country offices did not do an adequate job of assessing capacity in national institutions and that the organization was trying to help them to make better assessments. He reported that the question of using national auditors and of carrying out national audits was an ongoing one and cited several problems. Sometimes the national executing partners did not inform national audit offices in advance of the requirement that they carry out an audit on completion of the project or programme and that necessarily caused delays in performing the audit. Beyond that, the resources of the national audit offices were already very stretched. Policy guidelines for carrying out national audits were being developed.

326. The Director of OAPR said that there was an excellent working relationship between the audit offices of all the United Nations agencies and organizations and that he had included several joint activities with other agencies in his audit plans, especially with UNICEF. At times audits had made use of joint staff from the two organizations, which had saved time and money. He also reported that his office worked very closely with OIOS - joint investigations were a growing area of joint activity. In reply to the request for more information on the investigation of the Reserve for Field Accommodations, he reported that fraud cases were not normally reported to the Executive Board for fear of jeopardizing the investigation. However, once that case had been completed, he would report to the Executive Board.

327. The Director said that less than 50 per cent of Governments were behind in their contributions for country office maintenance. OAPR was following up on the projects that needed to be financially terminated as well as on the cases where tripartite reviews had been missing or delayed.

328. The Associate Administrator said that the recommendations concerning the number of vehicles being used by each of the country offices would also be looked at closely following the results of the audit. In some cases, however, offices needed more vehicles because of emergency situations. He reported that in the case of co-financing agreements, Assistant Administrators were being delegated more authority but that that was being accompanied by greater accountability. He said that the compacts that all of the Assistant Administrators had signed with the Administrator should enhance accountability. The entire organization was moving in the direction of results-oriented accountability.

B. UNFPA

UNFPA report

329. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) reported that UNFPA continued to benefit from an arrangement with OAPR concerning internal audit services: the UNFPA Internal Audit Section was based in OAPR while OAPR supervised internal audits carried out by public accounting firms in programme countries in Africa and in Asia and the Pacific. The Fund needed, however, to strengthen the coverage of internal audits, including establishing a contractual arrangement to cover Latin America and the Caribbean.

330. The Deputy Executive Director said that with the establishment of the Office of Oversight and Evaluation (OOE), the Fund had a clearer institutional arrangement for monitoring the implementation of audit plans and of audit findings. He reported that the core sections of the new Policies and Procedures Manual had been issued in November 1997. The new Finance Manual, to be issued in the near future, emphasized the priority the Fund attached to the financial closure of projects in a timely fashion. That would also be aided by a new financial monitoring system, currently being field-tested, that included mechanisms to trigger action to close projects as well as to monitor cash advances and unspent balances more closely.

331. The Deputy Executive Director also reported that the system of policy application reviews, which had been put into place in 1995, had proven to be a cost-effective tool for facilitating organizational development. The OOE was establishing a data bank of the findings of those reviews. He concluded by saying that the Executive Director would continue to ensure probity and accountability as she promoted decentralization in the organization.

332. Delegations welcomed the efforts that had been made in decentralization but several noted that that needed to be accompanied by follow-up and monitoring. In that regard, some delegations noted that the new Policies and Procedures Manual, which was designed to foster decentralization, was not yet complete. They hoped that it would be completed quickly and wondered what was being done in the interim.

333. Several delegations wondered about the statistic presented in paragraph 18 of document DP/FPA/1998/7, which said that 2,000 projects were operationally completed but had not had their financial records closed. What percentage of the total projects did that represent and what actions was UNFPA taking to address the situation? One delegation noted that such a situation meant that unspent funds from a completed project could not be allocated to a new project, thereby slowing down implementation.

334. Delegations also noted that the Fund was using two sets of procedures, those of UNDP and of UNFPA. They wondered whether the practice created confusion and how it was handled. One delegation felt that that indicated a very cumbersome administrative structure. Another delegation asked for clarification of paragraph 17, where it was noted that UNDP procedures were followed in the absence of specific UNFPA procedures and that there had been at times a lack of clarity on which procedures to follow in a given situation.

335. One delegation noted that in regard to country programmes, it was difficult to carry out evaluations in the face of lack of indicators and clearly stated objectives. The same delegation drew attention to paragraph 3 of document DP/FPA/1998/7, in which it was stated that there was not adequate staff to provide audit coverage of all UNFPA units within the optimal cycle of five to seven years, and asked what was being done.

336. One delegation expressed concern about the lack of review by the Contract Review Committee for the procurement by some country offices of goods and services in excess of $70,000, as mentioned in paragraph 24 of document DP/FPA/1998/7. One delegation noted that, as stated in paragraph 38, in several cases projected multi-bilateral funding had not been forthcoming and it had been necessary to use regular resources instead. One delegation noted the problems concerning the Training Branch raised in paragraph 20 and trusted that they were being addressed by the Administration.

337. One delegation expressed the view that UNFPA should report annually to the Executive Board on audit and oversight issues and asked that that be put into the overview decision of the Executive Board. Other delegations supported the request.

Response of the UNFPA Administration

338. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) addressed the issue of the new Policies and Procedures Manual. The new manual was essentially a revision of existing guidelines, mainly designed to reflect the decentralization process and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development as well as to simplify and streamline procedures. Therefore, the fact that small parts of the new manual were not completed did not mean that the Fund had been operating in a vacuum - in such cases, the old procedures remained valid. Also, he clarified the use of UNDP policies and procedures: the Fund tried to use UNDP guidelines whenever applicable and tried to avoid duplicating them. Such coordination was in line with the Secretary-General's recent reform efforts and had worked very well. The Chief of OOE reported that the major portion of the Programme Manual had been issued in November 1997 and that it was the first time that all the guidelines had been incorporated into one comprehensive manual. In the case of the monitoring and evaluation procedures, the new revision was the third version of those guidelines.

339. The Chief informed the Executive Board that the approximately 2,000 completed projects that had not been financially closed had been reduced by 435 by the end of 1997. The question of what unspent balance was tied up in such projects had also been looked into by the external auditors. Data on the actual volume would be provided to the Board members after verification. As mentioned in the Deputy Executive Director's opening statement, the Fund was working on building mechanisms into projects and programmes mechanisms that facilitated closing them financially and in monitoring cash advances.

340. In addressing the question of unclear objectives, the Chief agreed that was sometimes the case, especially with those programmes that had been developed for some time. However, the Fund had now adopted the use of logical framework techniques and staff were currently being trained in the use of those techniques. That should result in a clearer statement of programme purposes, outcomes and indicators in the future.

341. The Chief agreed with delegations that the coverage of audits was not satisfactory, even with the use of outside consultants. UNFPA would explore with OAPR how best to increase coverage in the current biennium. The question would be addressed in the next biennial support budget, and she hoped that the Executive Board would support the measures that the Executive Director would propose.

342. The Chief agreed with what had been expressed by delegations and the Director of OAPR concerning the important role that national execution had to play in building national capacity. The Fund's new guidelines placed greater stress on capacity-building and the transfer of skills. However, she also agreed that there needed to be greater efforts in assessing national capacity, and UNFPA was working with its partners in UNDG on that.

343. The Executive Board took note of the reports on internal audit and oversight activities of UNDP, UNOPS and UNFPA, contained in documents DP/1998/26, DP/1998/24/Add.1 and DP/FPA/1998/7, and requested UNFPA to take

appropriate measures to enforce recommendations contained in its report and to report annually on progress made.

C. UNOPS

UNOPS report

344. The Executive Director explained that internal oversight within UNOPS comprised three elements: (a) ongoing internal management oversight; (b) external audit by the Board of Auditors; and (c) oversight services contracted from OAPR. The first two were addressed in documents submitted to the Executive Board under agenda item 15. The Executive Director reaffirmed that UNOPS attached great importance to internal oversight and indicated that the relationship between UNOPS and OAPR was a fruitful one, identifying not only specific actions required for individual projects but also providing a basis for identifying recurring issues that could be addressed through training or other preventive measures.

345. Several delegations expressed their satisfaction that UNOPS was reporting directly to the Executive Board on its oversight issues. One delegation noted that of 1,700 projects cited in the report by UNOPS, it was not clear how many were being reviewed through the internal oversight mechanisms. The same delegation expressed scepticism that some general trends could not be derived from the recommendations concerning specific projects and requested clarification on that issue from the Executive Director. Another delegation requested information on the investigations into two cases of fraud reported in paragraph 10 of document DP/1998/24/Add.1.

Response by the UNOPS administration

346. The Executive Director thanked the delegations for their constructive comments. Responding to the inquiry on the number of projects being reviewed, he indicated that between 30 and 40 had been reviewed during the audit period. Those projects with unusual characteristics, such as Montreal Protocol projects involving the refitting and conversion of chemical industries, or management services agreements under the Japanese Procurement Programme, were reviewed at the specific request of UNOPS. While most audits of UNOPS projects were carried out with the assistance of OAPR, some were also performed by national auditing agencies of the donor country or in collaboration with other bodies, such as OIOS.

347. In response to the concern that general trends were not emerging from the audit reviews of specific projects, the Executive Director recalled his introduction, in which he had explained the role of the UNOPS Policy and Contracts Division in coordinating all audit responses. That arrangement, he stated, would help UNOPS in the future to identify any trends that could be redressed through training or procedural improvements. He expressed confidence that UNOPS, still only three years old, would continue to improve in obtaining value from its audits.

348. Addressing the fraud cases cited by one delegation, the Executive Director stated that one case involved misuse of an imprest account and the other one concerned unauthorized telephone calls in a regional project. Both cases were under review, with one having been referred to the UNDP Legal Section of the Office of Human Resources. He indicated that all available disciplinary and/or legal measures would be pursued once the facts in both cases had been established by the investigating bodies.

349. The Executive Board took note of the reports on internal audit and oversight activities of UNDP, UNOPS and UNFPA contained in documents DP/1998/26, DP/1998/24/Add.1 and DP/FPA/1998/7 and requested UNFPA to take appropriate measures to enforce the recommendations contained in its report and to report annually on progress made.

XVII. OTHER MATTERS

UNAIDS

350. The Director of External Relations of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) briefed the Executive Board on the challenge that HIV/AIDS was posing to development worldwide. She reported that there was some good news - HIV infection rates had stabilized or declined in some countries with effective prevention campaigns; however, the bad news was that AIDS killed as many people in 1997 as did malaria and that in high-prevalence countries life expectancy at birth had dropped back to the levels of the 1960s. In many cases, the hard-won achievements of development were being wiped out by AIDS, with all sectors being affected. Critical action was needed in all countries in which UNAIDS operated through the resident coordinator system. She called on the Board to support the HIV/AIDS activities of UNDP at the global, regional and country levels. In spite of the work that was being done, she asked the Board to consider whether it was enough in light of the immensity of the problem.

351. Several delegations spoke of the importance of the work of UNAIDS and said that they fully supported the coordination efforts to combat HIV/AIDS that were being undertaken by United Nations agencies through UNAIDS. Several delegations commented on the HIV/AIDS theme groups operating in programme countries, many of them chaired by UNDP, and said that the theme groups were accomplishing much good work and deserved the cooperation of all the organizations involved. One delegation pointed out that HIV/AIDS was not just a threat to the health of millions of people worldwide but was also a major impediment to development. One delegation stated that it was quite clear that not enough was being done.

352. One delegation spoke of the imaginative ways in which UNAIDS was using the resources available to it. It mentioned the development of a training and development centre in Spain, which was being supported by a grant from a regional government.

353. One delegation, speaking also for another, said that it would have liked to have had a briefing on specific actions that UNDP was taking in the fight against HIV/AIDS. That included information provided to the Executive Board on what had been decided at the Programme Coordinating Board of UNAIDS, which had

met the previous month. It reported on the retreat of all the co-sponsoring organizations of UNAIDS, which had also taken place the previous month. The retreat was seen as a milestone in achieving the full commitment of all the co-sponsoring organizations to the concept of UNAIDS. The Programme Coordinating Board meeting in May had endorsed the outcome of the retreat. Other delegations also welcomed the results of the retreat, with one delegation saying that it would be impossible to exaggerate the benefits of the retreat.

354. One programme country reported on the devastation that HIV/AIDS was causing in the country, and thanked UNAIDS, UNDP and UNFPA and the donor community as a whole for the assistance they were providing to fight the epidemic.

355. In their replies, the Director of External Relations of UNAIDS and the Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Development Policy thanked the delegations for their support. The Assistant Administrator said that she would provide greater information on UNDP-specific interventions. She said that the issue of the Resident Coordinator providing greater support for the HIV/AIDS theme groups had been raised. She said that she did not understand where the figure of $1 million mentioned by one delegation had come from. She said that in 1997-2000 it was expected that UNDP would spend $174 million on HIV/AIDS-related interventions, including cost-sharing. That included such things as those relating to ethics, law and HIV and helping to develop national strategic programmes. She reported that UNDP supported 22 HIV/AIDS national programme officers, including 11 in Africa, in addition to those on the UNAIDS staff. Regional support programmes included workshops for UNDP staff and counterpart national staff.

356. The Executive Board took note of the oral report on UNAIDS.

Report on World Trade Organization initiatives for least developed countries

357. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Development Policy reported on the steps taken by UNDP along with the other co-sponsoring agencies of the initiative to implement the Integrated Framework for Technical Assistance for Trade and Trade-related Activities for the Least Developed Countries. In her statement, the Director noted that to date 39 needs assessments had been received by the Interagency Working Group and that integrated responses had been prepared for each of them. She explained that the integrated response was a step towards the preparation of a country-specific, multi-year programme for trade-related assistance. The programmes, she said, would comprise concrete projects and would be presented at a donor meeting, most likely at a Consultative Group or round-table meeting. Upon receiving the integrated response, some 14 countries had expressed an interest in preparing for such donor meetings.

358. The World Bank had already started work in Uganda, preparing a trade programme for presentation at the next Consultative Group meeting. UNDP was involved in similar ways and was currently preparing a programme for Chad, Gambia and Mali. The previous month, during the Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO), some delegations had requested the active involvement of WTO in those donor meetings. Such requests had come inter alia

from Angola, Mali and Nepal. UNDP had welcomed the proposal and an agreement was being finalized with WTO.

359. The Director said that in an organization as decentralized as UNDP, the responsibility of participating in the integrated framework lay largely with the country offices. Effective participation required the conviction on the part of country offices that trade was part of an array of strategies and policies that helped to achieve sustainable human development. UNDP headquarters would continue to provide policy guidance to country offices on the links between trade, investment and integration in the global economy.

360. The Director informed the Executive Board that the introduction of the Integrated Framework had significantly increased the demands on the six co-sponsoring agencies to help build capacity in trade and trade-related areas. Countries that joined WTO had several years to adjust their legal and procedural systems and related institutions to the requirements of the organization. It was an enormous task in view of the limited capacities of many developing countries and time was running short. Vigorous action was needed quickly to provide tailor-made assistance to developing countries so that they could build necessary systems and operationalize them.

361. The commitment of UNDP was recognized by several delegations, which underlined the two strategic areas where UNDP had a comparative advantage: capacity-building and facilitation and aid coordination through the round-table meetings. Donor meetings, either in Geneva or in-country, were an important tool for enhancing coordination and promoting greater synergy between the efforts of the concerned Governments and the donor community. Several delegations reiterated the importance of having trade and trade-related matters included in the agenda of the round-table meeting in Geneva, even if a sectoral consultation on trade was held in the country at a later date.

362. While recognizing the importance of trade in their development policies, several speakers from the developing countries pointed out the need for broad-based macro and sector policies, encompassing trade and investment, improvement of infrastructure, financing, human resource and private sector development. In other words, trade alone was not sufficient and should be part of different instruments and policies for promoting a sustainable development of the least developed countries (LDCs). Delegations from both donor and programme countries asserted the importance for LDCs to take the lead in identifying their needs, in particular for the preparation of donor meetings and support to organize them. That was seen to be a key element of the Integrated Framework.

363. The Director and colleagues from the co-sponsoring agencies of the Initiative, the International Trade Centre (ITC), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and WTO, present at the meeting noted the importance of ownership of the process for the LDCs and reiterated their common will to support countries that requested assistance for the preparation of a trade and trade-related multi-year programme. Up to that time, only 14 countries had introduced such requests. UNDP stood ready to respond favourably to any requests it received.

364. The Director also insisted on the notion of partnership between the co-sponsoring agencies, as well as between the agencies and the Governments and civil society of the LDCs, and on joint programming. This point was further substantiated by UNCTAD and WTO, both providing concrete examples of joint programming and coordination. The WTO representative confirmed the interest of her organization to participating jointly with UNDP in the preparation and organization of sectoral round-table meetings for the countries having introduced such a request.

365. The need for a longer-term vision, strategic commitment and interrelated sectoral policies where trade was part of a broader framework was agreed upon. In that regard, the Third United Nations Conference on LDCs to be held in 2001 should provide such a holistic framework. UNDP and UNCTAD were committed in working closely together in organizing the Conference. Several delegations also supported the view that developing capacity for trade and enhancing capacities of developing countries to participate effectively in the world economy was a general problem that warranted a vigorous and broad-based capacity-building programme opened to all developing countries, not only to LDCs.

366. In response to the interest of several delegations on reporting issues, the ITC representative further elaborated on the activities to be carried out by the Administrative Unit. Besides the database on trade that will be established by the Unit, a system was being developed to track the evolution of different types of indicators, such as performance, impact and process indicators. Benchmark data would also be collected in order to monitor the impact of the programme.

367. The Executive Board took note of the oral report on World Trade Organization initiatives for least developed countries.

Montserrat

368. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean presented a request on behalf of the Government of Montserrat for the Executive Board to review the net contributor country (NCC) status of Montserrat. Briefing the Board on the current situation, he informed members that because of the catastrophic nature of the volcanic eruptions that had occurred in the past few years, economic output had practically ceased. Precise figures for national per capita income figures were not available but the latest government statistics had shown a decline in gross domestic product of approximately 58 per cent since 1994. There had also been considerable displacement of the population. The Board was informed that as a result of the state of virtual economic and social collapse, the request for reconsideration of the NCC status would have to be taken up when the country cooperation framework for Montserrat was presented for consideration at the first regular session.

Closing remarks by the President

369. At the closure of the session on Friday, 19 June 1998, the President thanked the delegations and the secretariat for a constructive and productive annual session and listed the important decisions that had been taken in respect of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS.

370. The Executive Board concluded its work by adopting the following decision.

98/17. Overview of decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its annual session 1998

(Geneva, 8-19 June 1998)

The Executive Board

Recalls that during the annual session 1998 it:

ITEM 1: ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Approved the agenda and work plan for its annual session 1998 (DP/1998/L.3; DP/1998/L.3* (Spanish only) and DP/1998/L.3/Corr.1) as orally amended;

Agreed to the following schedule of future sessions of the Executive Board in 1998 and 1999 subject to the approval of the Committee on Conferences:

Third regular session 1998:	14-18 September 1998
First regular session 1999:	25-29 January 1999
Second regular session 1999:	5-9 April 1999
Annual session 1999:	14-25 June 1999 (New York)
Third regular session 1999:	13-17 September 1999

Agreed to the subjects to be discussed at the third regular session 1998 of the Board, as listed in the annexed work plan;

UNFPA SEGMENT

ITEM 2: REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR 1997

Took note of the report of the Executive Director for 1997 on programme priorities, programme effectiveness, statistical overview and regional overview (DP/FPA/1998/3 (Part I), (Part I/Add.1), (Part II) and (Part III));

Requested the Executive Director to submit to the Executive Board at its third regular session 1998 a conference room paper on sector-wide approaches;

ITEM 3: ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY AND FINANCIAL RESOURCE UTILIZATION

Adopted decision 98/10 of 12 June 1998 on absorptive capacity;

ITEM 4: WORK PLAN AND REQUEST FOR PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE AUTHORITY

Adopted decision 98/11 of 12 June 1998 on the UNFPA work plan for 1999-2002 and programme expenditure authority;

Took note of the report on the status of financial implementation of country programmes and projects approved by the Governing Council and the Executive Board (DP/FPA/1998/8);

ITEM 5: PERIODIC REPORT ON EVALUATION

Adopted decision 98/12 of 12 June 1998 on UNFPA evaluation;

ITEM 6: INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Took note of the oral report on the UNFPA information and communication strategy;

ITEM 7: RESOURCE MOBILIZATION STRATEGY

Took note of the conference room paper containing an update of the UNFPA financial situation (DP/FPA/1998/CRP.3), and the comments made thereon;

UNDP SEGMENT

ITEM 8: ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

Took note of the report of the Administrator for 1997, including the introduction to the report, main programme record, global and interregional programmes, other funds and programmes, Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People, United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa, reports of the Joint Inspection Unit and statistical annex (DP/1998/17/Add.1-7 and DP/1998/17/Add.1 (Part III)/Corr.1), with comments made thereon;

Took note of the report on follow-up to decision 97/16 on change management, including the interim report on the subregional resource facilities (DP/1998/CRP.8);

Took note of the UNDP strategic plan 1998 (DP/1998/CRP.9);

ITEM 9: FOLLOW-UP TO THE UNITED NATIONS REFORM

Took note of the oral report on the UNDP role in the follow-up to United Nations reform;

Took note of the report on Emergency Relief Coordinator: Transfer of responsibilities to the United Nations Development Programme (DP/1998/18);

ITEM 10: EVALUATION

Took note of the report on UNDP evaluation activities (DP/1998/19);

ITEM 11: UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS

Adopted decision 98/13 of 19 June 1998 on the United Nations Volunteers programme;

ITEM 12: RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

Took note of the oral report of the President on the work of the Open-ended, Ad Hoc Working Group on the UNDP Funding Strategy;

Took note of the report on the round-table mechanism (DP/1998/CRP.2);

ITEM 13: COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS AND RELATED MATTERS

Adopted decision 98/14 of 19 June 1998 on assistance to Myanmar;

Took note of the report on the implementation of the human rights component of the first country cooperation framework for Belarus (DP/1998/22);

ITEM 14: COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION POLICY

Adopted decision 98/15 of 19 June 1998 on the UNDP communication and information policy;

ITEM 15: UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR PROJECT SERVICES

Adopted decision 98/16 on the activities of the United Nations Office for Project Services;

Took note of the report on follow-up to recommendations of the Board of Auditors (DP/1998/25);

ITEM 16: INTERNAL OVERSIGHT

Took note of the reports on internal audit and oversight activities of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Office for Project Services and the United Nations Population Fund, contained in documents DP/1998/26, DP/1998/24/Add.1 and DP/FPA/1998/7, and requested the United Nations Population Fund to take appropriate measures to enforce the recommendations contained in its report and to report annually on progress made;

ITEM 17: OTHER MATTERS

Took note of the oral report on the activities of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) in 1997;

Took note of the oral report on World Trade Organization initiatives for least developed countries;

Took note of the oral report on the UNDP programme in Montserrat.

19 June 1998

Annex

Third regular session 1998 (14-18 September 1998)

(5 working days*)

Item No.	Nature of report	Action/ Information	Time allotted	Item and subject
1				ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS
	Official (DP/1998/L.4)	A		Provisional agenda, annotations, list of documents
	Official	A		Report on the second regular session 1998
	Official	A		Report on the annual session 1998
	Official	I		Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at the annual session 1998
	CRP	I		Outline for Executive Board work plan 1999
				UNDP SEGMENT
2	Oral	I	1 day	UNDP 2001 : Progress report
3				FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
	Official	I/A		Annual review of the financial situation 1997 (including a report on the implementation of the budget for the biennium 1998-1999)
	Official	I		Risk management
	Official	I		Activities of the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office (including procurement from developing countries)
	Official	I		Subcontracts awarded and major equipment ordered
	Official	I		Review and revision of UNDP Financial Regulations and Rules
	Official	I		United Nations system technical cooperation expenditures 1997

Item No.	Nature of report	Action/ Information	Time allotted	Item and subject
4				COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS AND RELATED MATTERS
	Official	A	1 day	Review of the successor programming arrangements
	Oral	I		Report on implementation of the first country cooperation framework for Nigeria (97/25)
5				UNOPS: FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
	Official	A	½ day	Revised budget estimates for the biennium 1998-1999 (including risk management, reserves and surplus income)
6	Oral	I		UNIFEM (97/18)
7				RESOURCE MOBILIZATION
	CRP	A	½ day	Report of the Open-ended, Ad Hoc Working Group on UNDP Funding Strategy
				UNFPA SEGMENT
8	Oral	A	½ day	RESOURCE MOBILIZATION
9				FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
	Official	I		Annual financial review, 1997
	Official	A		Revision of financial regulations
	Official	I		Multi-bilateral and trust fund arrangements (97/26)
10				SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION
	Official	A	1½ days	Partners in Population and Development (96/9)
11	Official	A		COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS
12				COORDINATING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
	Official	I		Report on first meeting of the Coordinating Committee on Health
13	CRP	I		SECTOR-WIDE APPROACHES
14				OTHER MATTERS, including:
	CRP	I		- Field visits

Abbreviations: A = action; CRP = conference room paper; I = information; and UNOPS = United Nations Office for Project Services.